

# ANTSIRABÉ

THE SECOND ALL-AFRICA  
LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

1960



*Father of all men, whose mercy is great toward all who stand in need, and whose Son is the Redeemer of all who call upon Him; we thank Thee that Thou hast called unto Thyself a Church among our brethren who live in the vast continent of Africa.*

*We beseech Thee for that Church and especially for all who are gathering at this time to consider the affairs of Thy Kingdom at the All-Africa Lutheran Conference in Madagascar.*

*Let the light of Thy sun shine, we pray Thee, upon the new day that is dawning in Africa. Put to flight the dark hosts of racial and national pride, of selfishness and intemperance, of ignorance and the worship of false gods. Give to Thy Word power, and bestow upon Thy Church Thy Holy Spirit, that Jesus Christ may be made known to all men as the Way, the Truth and the Life.*

*Through the same, Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord.*

*Amen.*

# ANTSIRABÉ

A RECORD OF  
THE SECOND ALL AFRICA  
LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

*Antsirabé, Madagascar*

*September 8-18, 1960*

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to share with a wider reading public both the concrete results of the deliberations and the experience of nearly two hundred representative churchmen who met September 8-18, 1960, in Antsirabé, Madagascar. The occasion was the Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference, called together by the Department of World Mission of the Lutheran World Federation.

They met to consider the opportunities and responsibilities that lie before the Lutheran churches in restless, revolutionary, doubt-filled but hopeful Africa. As was said in a word of welcome to the delegates as they registered: "Today the times are more demanding on the Christian than ever. Africa is quivering with new hopes, new ambitions, new problems and dangers. . . . In lands where a thousand fingers beckon 'Come with me!' where nations and tribes and individuals are thrust into historic decisions on every day that passes, the word that Christ is the answer needs to be shouted from the housetops with authority."

Five years ago the first such conference had met. At Marangu in Tanganyika, on the slopes of Kilimanjaro, the African churches had first become acquainted with each other. That meeting was in fact the first attempt at assembling on African soil a conference aimed at drawing together people from the geographic extremes of Africa. It has since been succeeded by many others—both religious and political. The experience was a rich one in many ways. Many realized there for the first time the depths of a Christian fellowship that transcended racial, language, and cultural differences. There was at Marangu a vibrant atmosphere of personal Christian experience, and a realization consonant with the times, that the African was coming into a new era in the church as he was in other aspects of society in general. Delegates went home to work with renewed vigor for the establishment in Africa of African-led church life. And the results have since become apparent in the rapid developments in church organizations, the increasingly effective steps taken to develop indigenous leadership, an increasing sense of partnership between missionaries and African churchmen, and in many other ways.

Yet in many respects the Marangu conference report, read today, seems quite outdated.\* The conference at Antsirabé dealt in the main with issues that were just breaking the surface at Marangu. In the five years that have passed, a dozen and more new countries have been established in a political revolution that has its effects not only in Africa but throughout the world. The African peoples, with a new self-confidence, speak freely and frankly of their requirements and rights. At Marangu, a special session of the African delegates was called to insure frankness of expression. At Antsirabé, this was judged unnecessary; everyone spoke frankly in general sessions. Yet, and perhaps it was because of this capacity to speak frankly, the Africans left no doubt in Antsirabé that they wanted their European colleagues to work with them. The church in Africa shows, today at least, no sign of chauvinist nationalism or xenophobia.

The conference in Antsirabé was called at the request of the Marangu conference. Preparations began some three years in advance with preliminary discussions on program. The content of the program was developed in light of proposals from African members of the Commission on World Mission of the LWF.

Invitations were sent to all Lutheran churches in Africa. Most responded, and two hundred representatives were present from twenty-four churches and synods in nine countries. The Cameroun delegation, which had planned to come and had even started out, was prevented from attending because of travel difficulties. Groups related to the American Synodical Conference and the European synods in South Africa did not send delegations. Of the delegates who did attend, two-thirds were Africans, and the conference membership was completed by a small group of invited speakers and guests and staff members.

As introductory material for those who were to attend, the Department solicited and distributed a dozen preparatory papers which dealt with one aspect or another of the topics to be discussed. The writers represented a wide variety of theological and national backgrounds. The aim of the papers was not to provide authoritative statements, but to present many different and personal perspectives, so that participants would come to the conference ready to listen critically and speak informally. It has been impossible, unfortunately, to include in a report of this size more than a few excerpts from this preparatory material.

The delegates who came habitually use forty different mother tongues, but managed to communicate by the use of *linguae francae* and the use of a simultaneous interpretation system which in formal sessions offered a choice of English, French, Afrikaans, and Malagasy.

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\* Marangu. *A Record of the All-Africa Lutheran Conference*, Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation, Department of World Mission, 1956.

Apart from the plenary sessions, the conference was divided into three sections: The World We Serve, The Faith of Our Fathers, and The Missionary Church, in which the plenary addresses on the various topics under these headings were discussed. In addition, the delegates were assigned to one of ten Discussion Groups based on interest preference requested of them before their arrival in Antsirabé.

The daily program opened with prayer and Bible studies on the conference theme: "Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life." It has not been found possible to include in this report the texts of the Biblical addresses, each of which was presented by a different African delegate. The day then proceeded according to the schedule of events shown on page 38 and closed with evening prayers, also conducted by various African nationals.

For almost all of the plenary addresses, prepared texts in English or French were distributed to the conference, enabling participants with an imperfect knowledge of these languages to follow by eye as well as ear.\* The diet was not a light one. If one sometimes felt that the speakers reached beyond the capacities of a large part of their audience, it was comforting to know that they were following in a time-honored tradition. Discussion in the plenary sessions, in spite of a capable team of interpreters, sometimes moved too fast and was too diffuse to be conclusive.

It was, in fact, not until the results of the work of the Sections and Discussion Groups were brought to the floor in their reports that it became apparent that a great deal of solid, careful, and pointed discussion had taken place. The conference owes a great deal to the leaders of these groups as well as to the four chairmen who presided at all plenary sessions and directed the handling of the various reports. These chairmen were His Excellency Emmanuel Abraham of Ethiopia, Bishop Stefano Moshi of Tanganyika, Professor Rakoto Andrianarijaona of Madagascar, and the Rev. Kilbon J. Msomi of South Africa.

The conference ranged widely—perhaps too widely. But it tried, not entirely without success, to deal with the issues of the day.

Africa today is—to quote a Swedish scholar—"a politicized world. Every issue is a political issue. Politics intrude in every action." It was to be expected that this Christian conference should discuss the question of the Christian's responsibility as a citizen. From the first session to the final discussion, this question arose again and again. In the keynote address, in the discussion of education, in the problem of race relations, in the question of mission-church relationships, in the final

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\* Unfortunately, Professor Christian Baëta's address on Christian Education (prepared on short notice because a scheduled speaker was prevented from attending) could not be included in this report.

rally address by Dr. Fridtjov Birkeli who had formerly been a missionary in Madagascar (and who referred to the nationalistically motivated resurgence of traditional Malagasy burial customs), the new political consciousness of the African people was felt. And its presence was already apparent on the opening evening when the conference was honored to entertain at dinner and at the opening session the President of the Malagasy Republic, Mr. Philibert Tsiranana. A few days later, two prominent members of the Malagasy delegation had to withdraw early from the conference to begin their new duties as delegates to the National Assembly.

Africa today is also conscious of its economic and educational needs. The conference resolutions show that the conference was not asleep on these issues either. In short, Antsirabé showed that Lutheran Christians in Africa see themselves now, not as foreign related minorities, but as members of their society with a burden of Christian responsibility to that society.

The question of racialism has perturbed particularly southern Africa in 1960. The conference resolution on this issue, not passed without thorough study and debate, is forthright and strong. It is to the credit of the conference that it recognized that discrimination on racial grounds is not alone the sin of the white race; it voted to insert the word "tribe" in a draft which had not included it.

Not less important in the long run, perhaps, was the decision of the conference to encourage theological discussion of certain issues that concern Lutherans in their relations with other churches. Heretofore almost all of the theological expression in Africa has been the work of missionaries. At Antsirabé, too, discussion in the area of confessional questions was largely carried by non-Africans. If the hopes of the conference are realized, this may not be true much longer. Not only are an increasing number of theologically well-trained African churchmen coming up, but the proposed theological study committees may stimulate an articulation of thought that has not as yet had a channel of expression.

I have said above that one of the purposes of this report is to share the experiences of the participants in the conference. This was perhaps too much to say. There is no way of sharing in a formal report the impressions that flooded in upon the delegates, some of whom had never before been outside their own country.

The non-Malagasy participants had come to the conference by air; most of them by chartered flights from Nairobi and Johannesburg. They were met and entertained by the Lutheran congregation in Tananarive and after a visit in the capital proceeded to Antsirabé, some three hours by rail to the south. The conference site is a resort city situated

on the central plateau at an altitude of 1300 meters. ("I never thought," said a delegate from the Liberian forest, "that it could be so cold in Africa.") The city had extended itself to welcome the conference, the first international meeting to be held in Madagascar, and throughout our days there we were constantly aware of the warm hospitality of the Madagascar government and people. The conference met in the *Collège Luthérien*.

There is no adequate way of documenting the experience of the participants as they assembled in the vivid sunshine of Madagascar in spring-time, of the innumerable conversations at table and in hotel rooms, of the impact of participation in the public gatherings where conference participants and Malagasy Christians in hundreds and thousands worshiped and listened together to the proclamation of the Gospel; of the (sometimes sharp) exchange of views in the various sections and discussion groups or on the conference floor, or of the lighter moments—for example, when Ato Emmanuel Gebre Sillassie, President of the Lutheran Church in Ethiopia, the conference news reporter, looked out the window and made his weather forecasts or told of the Ethiopian winner of the Marathon in the Olympic Games.

Not least significant of the conference days were the two Sundays. On the first, the conference divided. One group traveled to Tananarive, where a series of events was scheduled by the Lutheran congregations there, the most important being an afternoon rally which assembled some five thousand Christian people. A number of delegates spoke briefly, bringing the greetings of their respective churches; the preacher was Dr. Birkeli. A second group remained in Antsirabé and shared in the dedication of the newly enlarged Church of the Holy Spirit, which, with a capacity of some three thousand, is the largest Protestant church in Madagascar. Others went as visitors and speakers to a score of out-lying churches. To all, especially to those coming from parts of Africa where Christians are a small minority, it was an impressive experience to see packed churches, to hear the magnificent singing of the congregations, and to sense the vitality of Malagasy Christianity. And to the Malagasy Christians, somewhat isolated from the rest of Africa for historic and ethnic as well as geographic reasons, this and the second Sunday were the opening of a window to a world hitherto unrealized.

The final day—also a Sunday—began with an early Communion service attended almost exclusively by conference members, but conducted in Malagasy with a sermon in English. The morning service followed. The afternoon began with a procession through the streets of Antsirabé to an outdoor amphitheater. There, in bright sunshine that brought out a magnificently colorful array of parasols, a crowd of well over five thousand gathered to hear the singing of choirs and

message from prominent Malagasy Christians as well as addresses by Dr. Birkeli and Ato Emmanuel Gebre Sillassie.

And what about the future? The conference itself already began to focus on the next meeting of representatives of the African churches five years hence. Just before presenting the keynote address, His Excellency Emmanuel Abraham brought greetings to the conference from His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Ethiopia, and presented the Emperor's invitation to hold the next All-Africa Lutheran Conference in Ethiopia. In one of its final resolutions the conference readily accepted this gracious invitation. Regional study groups were also proposed which are to report on their work to the next conference. And a general theme was also proposed: "Partners in Missionary Outreach."

It is, of course, impossible to predict the course of events in Africa, but it certainly was the hope of the representatives of the churches at this Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference that the fellowship established in Marangu and confirmed in Antsirabé would, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, lead to intensified efforts among the Lutheran churches and missions of Africa in reaching out to the unevangelized in the "uncommitted continent."

It remains to acknowledge the contribution of a great many people in the preparation and carrying out of the conference: the speakers, the great number of individuals and groups in Madagascar and elsewhere who did preparatory work and made travel arrangements, the staff of secretaries and translators, whose work was largely behind the scenes, the churches and mission agencies who provided for financial needs.

The Department staff has been in charge of editing the material for this report. It has been found impossible to include even a sampling of the discussion on the various topics because much of the solid work was done not in plenary session, but in the Sections and Discussion Groups. The addresses have had to be abridged because of lack of space, but we hope that they represent a faithful picture of the thoughts of the speakers. The papers and addresses themselves, of course, do not necessarily represent the opinions of the conference or of the LWF.

The reports and resolutions adopted by the conference have no authority except for their intrinsic value, for the conference did not speak *for* the churches from which the participants came. It spoke rather *to* those churches, and the question of whether the conference had any significance will ultimately find its answer in the response that the African churches give to the Antsirabé resolutions and the influence of that conference experience in the lives of those Christians who attended.

ARNE SOVIK

Lutheran World Federation  
Department of World Mission

November 15, 1960

# THE CHRISTIAN AND POLITICS

DAISUKE KITAGAWA\*

## WHAT Is POLITICS?

Politics, in brief, is the discipline governing the life of many people who are grouped together. Human society, whether a small voluntary group or a large national state, must be governed according to certain rules and regulations.

## THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR POLITICS

What kind of rules and regulations a given society will have for its collective behavior and action depends on what its theological or philosophical presupposition is. For the Christian, the basic presupposition is that man was created as a person in the image of God; that all men are children of God and in God's eyes are equal one with another; and that men are intended to live in fellowship with one another as members of the household of God. This means, among other things, that for the Christian, no form of politics which reduces in any way a man or men to *means* of exploitation by other men, or which tolerates such practices, can remain unchallenged. Questions regarding social justice, political power or authority, types of government or political rule, relationship between the ruler and the ruled, and the like, can find adequate answers only on the basis of this theological presupposition. It is therefore of the utmost importance for the Christian to articulate his theological presupposition when engaged in political deliberation and action.

## POLITICS Is UNAVOIDABLE

Where there is a group of men, politics is inevitable. If, therefore, we have to be involved in politics at all, we must be as intelligent about it as we possibly can. We must be informed of the ground rules. None of us are permitted to be mere onlookers or spectators in this game. We must either be self-conscious participants or be pushed around,

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\* Rev. Daisuke Kitagawa, Secretary, Secretariate on Racial and Ethnic Relations, Department on Church and Society, World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland

exploited and victimized by others. We are all inescapably involved in politics, and therefore had better be more "up on it" in order to be responsible participants in it.

### PREY OF POLITICAL FORCES

In the past Christians have so often become the prey of political forces largely due to their naïveté. The missionary's disinterestedness in politics, or his political neutrality, was in effect just about the same as his condoning, if not encouraging, much of the social injustice and economic exploitation imposed on the African people by the Western nation to which he belonged.

The African Christian, by scrupulously avoiding being involved in the nationalist movement, will have lost the real opportunity to make it a more positive and constructive force, and so instead may have unwittingly contributed to allowing negative forces to come to the fore.

Modern society involves everybody in everybody else's business. This without some discipline and commonly accepted rules of conduct will never work. Equally indispensable is the will to "play the game by its rules" and the knowledge of the rules on the part of all the citizens.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF AFRICAN NATIONALISM TODAY

Any Christian who closes his eyes to the continent-wide movement of African nationalism is disobedient to God, who is the Lord of history. African nationalism is one of the glorious fruits of missionary work through which African people were awakened to the sense of the God-given dignity of man, and the responsibility of standing on their own feet in order to participate in the human community throughout the world. For the Western missionary not to see this in contemporary African nationalism is to refuse to see God at work in history. One of the most important tasks he can perform is to interpret its Christian significance to the Western nations as well as to the Europeans who are now ruling Africa.

Utmost effort is required on the part of the African Christians to prevent African nationalism from becoming degenerated to a merely anti-Western or anti-foreign movement. His task may be to interpret to his non-Christian compatriots the place and role of the autonomous nation-state within the structure of the modern world-wide human community. Failure at this point may turn African nationalism into little more than a modern version of tribalism.

From the above, one can clearly see how important it is for the missionary and the African Christian to engage in a frank and straightforward conversation on the political issues confronting African and Western nations alike today.

## POLITICS AND HUMAN NEEDS

When we think about politics it is helpful to note that there are "political" problems which need to be looked at from a broadly human point of view on the one hand and that there are, on the other, basically "human" problems which can be met only by political action. For the *former* need to be adequately met, professional politicians must constantly listen to the voice of concerned lay citizens. Christians in every country therefore must take it upon themselves to remind statesmen of the basically human character of the problem involved.

With regard to the *latter*, we may take as an example the education of children. In order to provide a good education for all children in the nation a good school system is required. Collective action of the citizenry at large is thus necessary to meet this basically human, non-political problem. Collective action means political action.

## POLITICS AS CHRISTIAN VOCATION

It is quite clear that no human society, be it a local township or a nation state, can go on without a certain number of professional politicians—those who became specialists in politics, as it were, as against those who become specialists in medicine, law, education, etc. A modern state is an extremely complex structure and interrelations of one state with another within the context of an increasingly one world community cannot come about without extensive work expertly done by people specially trained for the task.

It is therefore a highly commendable thing if a Christian aspires to enter into politics. It is much better for the nation if a devout Christian becomes a professional politician than if an atheist or an out-and-out secularist does. At the same time there is one thing which he as a professional politician must never do, that is, to use politics to further the cause of the Christian Church as such. To accept politics as one's Christian vocation is to serve society—be it a local township or a nation—and all its citizens, by devoting one's life to making the political structure with its complex machinery and process function so as to meet the real need of the people.

Thus conceived the life of a Christian as a professional politician is by no means an easy one.

## WHERE PEOPLE HAVE NO POLITICAL VOICE

Finally, what is the Christian to do in countries where large segments of the population are legally deprived of the opportunity to participate directly in the politics which determines their own welfare and destiny?

This is a political problem which needs to be looked at from the stand-point of the basic human rights of all men to fulfill their God-given manhood. To solve it, however, political measures are required, which usually involve a long and drawn-out political struggle on the part of the politically voiceless people. What is the Christian to do who belongs to the voiceless group that is desperately fighting to gain its political rights? What is the Christian to do who belongs to the dominant group which is desperately fighting to keep the status quo?

From the Christian point of view it is definitely wrong to try and keep the status quo unchanged. The heretofore voiceless people must gain a voice and participate in the politics of the society of which they are an integral part. One of the really difficult tasks here is to establish some channel of communication between groups of opposing interests. It is one thing for an individual African to trust and be trusted by an individual European, say within the church, but it is a totally different thing for Africans as a group to trust and be trusted by Europeans as a group in the present political climate of African society. The best possible use should be made of every organized group now in existence, both by the African and the European communities. The African Christian should be encouraged to take active part in one or more of such organizations whose objective and operative principle are in harmony with the Christian ideal and way of life, while the European Christian should do everything possible to help the European community in Africa (government, industry, commerce, trade union, etc.), see their real significance.

The European community must learn, before it is too late, to listen to the responsible voice of the African community. Where there exists unwillingness to do so, missionaries and pastors of European congregations in Africa must boldly speak up for this need and do their utmost to realize it. The African community must have an organized body through which to speak and act corporately, so that its real voice may be heard without undue distortion, but with due force. To deny this to them will only make the situation go from bad to worse.

At this juncture it must be stated emphatically that as long as there exists even the slightest possibility for multiracial groups, the attempt should be avoided to organize groups solely or exclusively on the basis of color and race. When, however, circumstances permit no such group to function, groups based on color or race become an inevitable necessity and the Christian should not hesitate to take part in them.

## THE URBAN CHURCH

PAUL G. PAKENDORF\*

### I. THE FACT OF URBANIZATION

The rapid process of urbanization of African society is a fact. African society, which for centuries has been rural, is undergoing a rapid change in consequence of industrialization and urbanization. It is safe to say that there is hardly any single person—especially among the males—in Africa today who has not spent some time at least in an urban environment and been exposed to those influences that are peculiarly urban. But it is also true that even those who have become permanently urbanized still, to a large extent, have their roots in the rural areas and still draw upon the spiritual resources which guided African society in the past and gave it stability. The process of urbanization, however, will increase and a permanent, fully urbanized population, divorced entirely from the land, will emerge and is already emerging at a rapid rate.

### II. THE MEANING OF URBANIZATION

Society in Africa was, and largely still is, homogeneous. Differences in wealth and rank and position did exist, but the general impression that one gets is that of homogeneity. Society was nonprogressive and static, well-organized with duties well-defined within the pattern and framework of the tribe.

Urbanization is producing a new type of person who approaches closely to the image of urbanized man everywhere: pushful, energetic, mentally alert, progressive and self-reliant, but also more unreliable and more prone to succumb to the many temptations.

#### *A) Occupational Differentiation*

In rural society occupations differed mainly according to sex and age. In the urban area individual ability and merit determine one's

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\* Pastor Paul G. Pakendorf, Chairman, Council of Churches on Lutheran Foundation in Southern Africa, Superintendent, Evangelical Lutheran Church—Zulu-Xhosa-Swazi Region, South Africa

occupation and consequently the position one holds in society. Whereas in rural society nearly all followed agricultural or pastoral pursuits, we now get far greater differentiation in the towns irrespective of age or sex: professional men and women—doctors, lawyers, teachers, nurses, social workers; businessmen and traders; artisans and skilled tradesmen and laborers; and the vast array of unskilled laborers that is developing into an uprooted proletariat.

*B) Economic Differentiation*

Urbanization has meant a change-over from a subsistence economy to a money economy. In rural society there were no great extremes of wealth and poverty and there was great mutual helpfulness. We now get wage earners who are dependent on the weekly paypacket and salaried men and women who get their remuneration at the end of every month. Then there is the emergent capitalist class; there are no millionaires yet, but there definitely are wealthy people. We now get beggars and utter destitution.

*C) Intellectual and Educational Differentiation*

In the towns we get a great concentration of graduates, doctors, writers, journalists, and intellectuals. This is the great difference in intellectual outlook between country and town. In the urban areas you get greater skepticism, greater questioning, more probing into things, more intellectual alertness than in the country. You also get greater needs in this respect that are met by books, libraries, theaters, concerts, and social gatherings.

*D) Religious Differentiation*

The old religious sanctions are on the way out, but still persist to a surprising extent. The old gods were tied to the soil and to the seasons, to places and to tribal institutions. What has or will take their place? In towns you get the agnostic next to the believer in superstitions of the most primitive kind.

*E) Moral Differentiation*

Tribal society was characterized by moral stability and the validity of ethical values. Urban society is largely a society without women and characterized by the breakup of family life, a high illegitimacy rate, crime, and drink. True also of urban life is the fact that you get shining examples of devotion to duty, purity, and the upholding of ethical values generally.

One should also mention the use of leisure time and the interest evinced in games and sport generally: football, tennis, boxing, athletics, etc.; music and singing competitions; the emergence of new

co-operative societies and mutual aid; gambling and various games of chance.

Special mention must be made of the fact that urban society is multi-lingual, because this bears directly on the work of the church. In rural areas society is usually linguistically homogeneous; in towns usually "all" languages are spoken.

### III. THE TASK OF THE CHURCH

#### A) *Facilities*

The demand of the times consists of the urgent need for facilities in the townships. Urbanization has brought with it huge housing schemes and in these areas facilities have to be provided. One thinks first of all of places of worship; next, of residences for the office bearers of the church—pastors and others; next, of halls and centers of recreation and social life. Such places serve as centers of integration in the general disintegration of urban life. Without such facilities the church can do nothing, or very little, to meet the challenge of urbanization. Great sums of money will be necessary, but they will be well invested and will pay rich dividends.

#### B) *Office Bearers*

The position of the missionary in the life of the urban church in Africa is peripheral.

The pivotal position is that of the *indigenous pastor* who in every respect shares the life of the people to whom he ministers. He must be a man of the highest integrity in order to avoid the many pitfalls and temptations of urban life. He must have had the best training available, be thoroughly westernized, but not out of sympathy and out of touch with the common folk of his people. A good general education and a thorough grounding in the principles of theology will enable him to hold his own and act as guide and preacher and counselor. What is needed is a grasp of the great principles of Christianity and not so much detailed knowledge of facts, the ability to think along theological lines and not so much a mastery of techniques.

He will need and, if he is the right kind of man, he will find helpers of various kinds, voluntary, part-time, full-time, paid and unpaid, trained and untrained. It is conceivable that we need people for social work who have received some training.

#### C) *Preaching and Teaching*

The proclamation of the gospel is the essential task of the church in any environment. This proclamation cannot and should not consist of the repetition of biblical facts, but should make the essentials

of the gospel relevant, meaningful, real, and transparent to the listeners in their environment.

Teaching the young in the Sunday school and the confirmation class needs careful attention. Apart from these "normal" activities of the church, courses for laymen and women should be organized. It is here where intellectuals can be met on their own ground. It is here where instruction in the great biblical truths can be given. Discussion groups could emerge from such courses that would help to bring the light of the gospel truth to shine on the darkness of urban life. Such training is absolutely necessary for those who in any way may be classed as "helpers"—elders, leaders of women's and youth organizations, Sunday school teachers.

*D) Methods and Means*

1. In urban areas the church should endeavor to entrust only one congregation to a man.
2. Use should be made of committees and subcommittees and the pastor should understand the art of delegating tasks. Great care should be given to the keeping of records and of minutes and of transacting business and conducting elections.
3. Great care must be taken in financial matters. The church must also learn how to raise funds. There is much to be learned yet in this whole field. Money is readily available in the towns. The church must learn to get it and to administer it properly.
4. The church should make use of modern means of reaching people. The press and literary work generally have not received the attention they need yet. I do not only refer to church periodicals and papers; the secular press should also be used. The radio also offers possibilities which should be made use of. In addition, house to house canvassing can be done in the urban areas much more effectively than in the country.
5. Pastoral care and counseling and visiting in the houses of people is an essential task of the church. Big hospitals should be visited regularly; prisons and other places of detention also. Where there is illness, death, or other distress the church should bring comfort.
6. It is essential that the church take its due share in the public life of the community. Its office bearers should serve on boards and committees, especially if these be such as serve educational, social, and humanitarian purposes.
7. Church organizations for the young, for women and other groups are assumed to exist everywhere and are only mentioned here.
8. Co-operation and comity should characterize the attitude to other churches. It must be made clear to the outside world that Christians, though worshiping in different churches, yet serve one Lord.

## HOW DO WE PREACH THE GOSPEL TO YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY?

WILHELM BUSCH\*

This question is so important because the church is always tempted to advance at so-called "weak points." "Weak points" are those at which the preaching of the gospel is met with little resistance. Special concern is shown toward children and the aged. It is primarily the women and much less the men who are sought out. Sociologically speaking, it is the middle class to which appeal is made. The leading industrialists and the great masses of workers are largely untouched by the gospel. What we need are persons who follow the line of greatest resistance!

But we must get to know these young people. Older people often think that young people are joyous and carefree. But I am convinced that that is not the case as far as youth in most countries is concerned. Young people are overrun by so many problems that they often find themselves in profound despair. These young people do not have an answer to the question regarding the meaning of life. They don't know how to deal with their sexual problems. They feel that their parents do not understand them. And they find very little contact with young people of the same age. That is why they are often so lonesome. They realize that their life is not in order, and they do not know how to set it in order.

In this connection I must say a word to those who want to work with young people and who say that they must first establish contact with them before they can preach the gospel to them. Much time and effort is spent trying to establish "contact." I consider that unnecessary. He who has to *try* to establish contact will have difficulty in doing so. If a young man has the feeling that I like him, then all I have to do is slap him on his shoulder and say "Hi!"—and contact is there!

We are the only ones who still have a credible message. For I have

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\* Pastor Wilhelm Busch, Youth Pastor, Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, Essen, Germany

the impression that young people are living in very great spiritual need: they can no longer take anything seriously. Our age has experienced too intensely the great ideologies and their decline. Too many pompous words have been spoken. They are prepared to discuss everything, absolutely everything. But they are not able to take anything seriously. They do not take love seriously, nor their vocation, nor their country. The terrible thing is that these young people no longer take even themselves seriously.

The gospel of the New Testament, however, has such power and such depth that one must take it seriously. There is no other possibility. I experienced again and again in my evangelization work that it is precisely young people who come in great numbers and who indicate an almost profound readiness to listen to the message of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who died for us and rose again.

The gospel has a chance today as it has not had since the time of the Reformation. There is only one thing—the churches have in general not yet taken notice of the fact.

For one thing, the language of our preaching must undergo a change. I have said to myself: I must preach as if I were carrying on a personal conversation with these people. I am concerned not to preach but to speak. However, I have noticed that when I do so I come into conflict with the ceremonious language of our worship services. Very many young people come to a service or to an evangelism meeting and put up from the very beginning a shield in front of them with which they intend to defend themselves against attack. I am only then able to score with the arrow of the Word of God when they have let this shield down. And they do it when they feel that I intend to converse with them.

It is very important today to speak in pictorial language. People are much more concerned with pictures than they are with concepts. The Bible shows us, in fact, pictures. It does not speak theoretically about redemption but it shows us the Son of God as he hangs on the cross. It does not speak theoretically about life, but of the Resurrection of Jesus and about men who lead a new life in his power.

One thing is most important however. Every young person secretly asks when he listens to me: "Does this fellow believe what he is saying?" He puts this question, perhaps unconsciously, but he puts it, nevertheless. And that is why everything depends on whether or not I myself have that certainty which only the Holy Spirit can bestow. When people recognize by what is said that this certainty which comes from the Holy Spirit is there, then the sermon will have results.

Thus the most important thing is not the language, but that one speaks with the authority of the Holy Spirit. I am also convinced that

the most effective witness to young people is that which young people of the same generation make. Of course, preachers and evangelists will have to proclaim the gospel to the younger generation. But this service must be supplemented, must be emphasized and strengthened, by the witness of young people themselves, young people whom Christ has confronted.

But you have to know what you want to accomplish. I have the impression that in Christendom today there is a widespread uncertainty as to what one wants to accomplish. Persons attempt to give young people "aids" for their life. That is certainly something very fine. But if I were a young man I would be quite justified in doubting whether such messengers of the gospel are the right people to give counsel to me concerning the problems of my life. The Stoic philosophers also attempted to give men "aids" for their life. If we want to do this, it would be better if we laid the New Testament aside and attempted to learn from the Stoics.

At a conference for youth workers some time ago, it was said: "We cannot speak to young people about the cross of Jesus and about the forgiveness of sins. They don't understand it all." I protested vehemently: "It is precisely young people who know about the reality of the guilt in their life, and they long to hear about him who has paid for their guilt and who offers them the forgiveness of sins."

What would happen if all the messengers of the gospel would really preach the message of the gospel to young people today! I am convinced that we would experience great revivals among youth all over the world.

# CHURCH DISCIPLINE IN THE LIGHT OF LAW AND GOSPEL

WALTER A. TROBISCH\*

## I. THE QUESTION

An African pastor who is on an exchange scholarship in America attends a Communion service on Good Friday and notices with surprise that the whole congregation, numbering almost a thousand, takes Communion without exception. In answer to the question as to whether each of the communicants had been previously examined as to his "worthiness," he is told, "No, of course not!" The question which arises in his mind is therefore quite justified. How is it possible that the missionaries, who were sent out by the very congregation in whose service he participated, could have introduced such a totally different practice in his home church in Africa?

## II. TWO MISUNDERSTANDINGS

This divergence in practice can be traced to two misunderstandings which (to overstate the case somewhat) may be formulated in this way:

1) *The gospel as cheap grace.* This misunderstanding looks upon God as a benevolent grandfather who closes his eyes when his grandchildren make mistakes. Forgiving sin is his job, the very purpose of his existence. He has so much forgiveness that he has difficulty disposing of it all, for which reason he offers it for nothing. Everyone can have as much of it as he wants, without humiliation, without remorse, without change, without forsaking his sins, without restitution. No one has to take his sin seriously, for God himself doesn't take it seriously. The Lord's Supper becomes a matter of lavishing the grace of God on persons who are impenitent.

Cheap grace is the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner . . . is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without Church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution

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\* Pastor Walter Trobisch, Chaplain, Collège Evangélique, Libamba, Cameroun, West Africa

without contrition. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the Cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate. (D. Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, p. 37f.)

The gospel misunderstood as cheap grace sows spiritual death in the form of superficiality and indifference, something to which the Christians of Europe and America are especially prone.

2) *The Law as dead legalism.* This misunderstanding looks upon God as a policeman, someone who is zealous for the very letter of the Law, as a kind of heavenly prosecuting attorney. The church becomes God's bailiff or deputy. Her chief task is to see to it that sin does not take place, and to punish it when, despite all her efforts, it does take place. The best means of doing this is exclusion from the Lord's Supper. The greatest sin is adultery. The elders of the congregation become detectives, and the church council can even consider withdrawing the baptismal certificate, the possession of which becomes in turn a kind of certificate of good conduct. And the Lord's Supper becomes a procession of the righteous and worthy who, by means of their participation, publicly boast that they have not committed adultery during the last four weeks, or at least the fact that they have not been caught at it. Dead legalism is judging the sinner and not the sin, is confession of sin without communion, is discipleship without grace, the cross without grace, Christ without grace.

The pious fellowship permits no one to be a sinner. So everybody must conceal his sin from himself and from the fellowship. (D. Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, p. 110.)

The Law misunderstood as dead legalism sows spiritual death in the form of Pharisaism and hypocrisy, something to which the Christians of Africa are especially prone.

### III. THE BIBLICAL WAY

1) *Voluntary confession.* (John 20:23; Matt. 16:19; Matt. 18:18; Matt. 9:8; James 5:16; Luke 23:41-43; Luke 15:21; Ps. 32:3-5; 1 John 1:9; Mark 1:5; Acts 19:18.)

Of Confession they teach that Private Absolution ought to be retained in the Churches. (*Augsburg Confession*, Art. XI)

Luther, who throughout his life always had a father confessor, says in his 8th Invocavit sermon:

I will let no man take private confession from me and would not give it up for all the treasures of the world, since I know what comfort and strength it has given me. No one knows what private confession can do for him except he who has struggled much with the devil. Yea, the devil would have slain me long ago if confession had not sustained me. (Luther, Sermons in Lent, 1522, *Weimar Ed.*, 10, III, 61f.)

For which reason, when I admonish to go to confession I am admonishing to be a Christian. (Luther, *Large Catechism* (On Confession); cf. *Small Catechism*, Part V (On Confession).)

"Forward to Luther!" The Lutheran way is that of voluntary confession before God in the presence of a brother in Christ who, as a witness of one's remorse, addresses to one the word of forgiveness. When we forget this we fall into the two extremes of cheap grace and dead legalism.

This way prevents a misunderstanding of the gospel as cheap grace. Grace is costly. It demands humiliation. The presence of the brother forces one to take sin seriously and thereby helps one to take God seriously. He who is not prepared to humble himself in the presence of another is not prepared to humble himself before God, either. Personal confession is the test of whether one takes remorse seriously. Here grace is experienced *in* discipleship, forgiveness is imparted *by means of* the cross. Confession is confrontation with the living, incarnate Christ—in the person of the brother.

At the same time the misunderstanding of the Law as dead legalism is prevented. Here it's not a matter of discovery by the police, but the voluntary return of the prodigal son. It is the voluntary character of confession which distinguishes evangelical confession from the formalism of the Catholic confessional. This formalism is simply being substituted in Africa by the pseudo-evangelical formalism of church discipline. We do not become evangelical simply by substituting one formalism for another! In truly evangelical confession the emphasis does not lie on the Law and sins—for which reason the attempt to distinguish between "greater" and "lesser" sins cannot be maintained, a distinction which is also Catholic. The emphasis lies entirely upon the personal word of forgiveness spoken by the brother in the name of Christ. Church discipline without remorse does not change the heart. But true confession is conversion, because it takes the will of God seriously, in a genuinely evangelical way. (*Prov. 28:13.*)

In confession the Christian begins to forsake his sins. Their dominion is broken. From now on the Christian wins victory after victory. (Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, p. 115.)

There is no place in the New Testament where one can find punishment and church discipline mentioned with respect to a sin voluntarily confessed.

I meet the whole congregation in the one brother to whom I confess my sins and who forgives my sins. (*ibid.*, p. 113.)

It is true, one does find voluntary, spontaneous restitution (*Luke 19:18; Acts 19:19*). But this is only as the result of forgiveness, not

as punishment for sin and certainly not as the condition laid down for the reception of grace. In this sense one can say that costly grace is not only not cheap, it is absolutely *free!*

In Jesus' Parable of the Prodigal Son (*Luke 15:11-32*), the father does not condemn the son who has just returned to live for six months in a back room, until it can be determined whether or not his remorse is genuine! Upon the confession of his son (*v. 21*) he forgives him immediately and entirely. He clothes him, presents him with gifts, and *eats* with him! Those who frown upon such evangelical practice and who, for pedagogical reasons, shake their finger disapprovingly find their counterpart in the elder son (*vs. 25-32*).

In *I Cor. 11:29* we do not find "unworthy" as an attribute of the communicants, but we find "unworthily" as an adverb modifying the verb "to eat." "Unworthily" means to gulp down the Lord's Supper like an ordinary meal, to take no notice of the fact that the Lord is offering himself in this Supper in a special manner. "Worthily" means to know oneself to be *unworthy* to meet the Lord. "They alone are unworthy who will not admit themselves sinners." (Luther, *Large Catechism*, Sacrament of the Altar.) Exclusion of a repentant sinner from Communion is unbiblical.

2) *Admonition and conviction.* (*Matt. 18:15-22*) Here it is a question not of a secret sin touching only the person of the sinner himself, but of a public transgression which causes offense, one that is already known to several persons. The first thing which a Christian owes his brother in such a case is a private fraternal admonition and *not* the informing of others, not even the pastor or the church council. The secrecy of such a conversation must be kept with the same conscientiousness with which the secrecy of confession is kept. In case the person should not heed such admonition, two or three witnesses (and this does not necessarily include the pastor!) should be taken along to add effectiveness to what is said. Only when this, too, is of no avail should the case be brought before the congregation. Should the person concerned heed such admonition, even if only in the last stage, he has been won over, and has been set free and redeemed. And discipline is not applied (*v. 15*). The goal of such admonition and conviction is to bring the brother to a recognition and confession of his sin. It is to win over, and not to judge or punish. It is missionary activity (*II Sam. 12:7, 13*).

3) *Exclusion.* (*Matt. 18:17b; II Thess. 3:6, 14; I Cor. 5:5, 11-13*.) This is an exception in the New Testament and only the last and most extreme means that a congregation has, *after* every admonition has been to no avail (*Titus 3:10*). This is never applied to the penitent, but exclusively to the impenitent, those without remorse, those who

are hardening themselves, those whose sin has become known publicly and whose continuance in sin results more in their excluding themselves than in their being excluded.

*The immediate purpose* of exclusion is to testify before the impenitent and the world to the totally different character of the church of Christ and to demonstrate the seriousness of sin.

*The hoped-for result*, however, is not the expulsion of the errant, impenitent brother, but his being won again by this extreme means. Like admonition and conviction, exclusion is missionary activity (*II Thess. 3:15; II Tim. 2:25f*).

If one compares *Matt. 18:17* with *Matt. 9:10, 11* and *Matt. 11:19*, where Jesus eats (!) with publicans (!), one must come to the conclusion that our congregations must reconsider their practice of excommunication. "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it" (*I Cor. 12:26*). Would it not be a great testimony if, because of the adultery of one member, the whole congregation were to refrain from celebrating the Lord's Supper for a month? In this case church discipline would experience its most profound purpose; it would become the expression of solidarity under the burden of sin; it would become a vital experience within the Body of Christ. "This idea of the struggle against the demonic powers which the church carries on *along with sinners* can be found in several passages in the New Testament where it is a question of excommunication." (M. Thurian, *La Confession*, p. 46f; *Evangelische Beichte*, p. 16), (*I Tim. 1:20*.)

#### IV. BORDERLINE CASES

There are borderline cases in which one could entertain the possibility of excluding a *penitent* sinner from the Lord's Supper.

1) If the sin has become public in character and if it should therefore appear expedient for congregational or general reasons. Exclusion from the Lord's Supper for a certain period in such a case would be understood as a pedagogical measure and as a warning to others (*I Tim. 5:20*).

BUT—would not a weak brother be deprived of the Lord's Supper just at a time when he might need it most?

2) If the person concerned sought to keep his sin secret and only because of its becoming known did he show remorse and desire forgiveness. The period of exclusion from the Lord's Supper would be understood in such a case as a test of genuine remorse.

BUT—can one really deduce a proof of genuine remorse from the fact that a person has refrained from committing a certain sin for a certain period of time? In practice, it turns out that the period "under

discipline" is spent like one serves a prison sentence, and then admission to the Lord's Supper is again demanded, like a right into which one has again entered possession. The idea of reform or change is usually lost sight of.

3) If the fruitlessness of forgiveness is demonstrated by means of repeated relapse.

BUT—does this not contradict the essence of grace expressed in *Isa. 53:5* and *Matt. 18:21*? Can human reason presume to judge the fruitfulness or fruitlessness of grace? (*Matt. 7:3-5*.)

Behind these three borderline cases lies a pedagogical understanding of excommunication which runs the danger of falling into Catholicism again, i.e., the danger of placing human conditions upon God's unconditional grace and thus of denying the Lutheran principle of "sola gratia." This danger would be avoided if in these three borderline cases the person concerned were voluntarily to abstain from Communion, without this having been forced upon him as a condition for forgiveness, out of love to the Lord whom he had grieved and out of respect to the congregation, precisely *because he desired* the Lord's Supper. Everything, of course, depends upon the motive.

It is a question whether the love of Christ should not make us more imaginative and enable us to think of other ways of giving expression to remorse. *I Timothy 5:20*, for instance, does *not* mention the Lord's Supper as a means. There was the case, for example, of an African husband who had confessed to adultery and who agreed, *after* receiving absolution, to gather a bundle of wood for his wife each evening for a month. He did this not to merit the grace of God, but in order to make visible and to put into practice the forgiveness he had received absolutely free. This humble and (as far as the customs of his country are concerned) humiliating act was a greater testimony for his wife and his congregation, and a greater help to himself as well, than his exclusion from the Lord's table. One cannot set up general rules for such borderline cases, but pastoral counseling must find the right way in each case.

## V. SOME POINTED QUESTIONS

*To the African churches:*

Why are you so interested in church discipline? Is it not because, by appeal to legal measures, you hope to cover up a certain lack of inner spiritual authority? (*Matt. 23:24*.)

*To the European and American churches:*

Where does your numerical superiority over the African churches come from? Does it not arise from taking the law far too lightly? Do

you not try to justify theologically your own laxity and lukewarmness by charging the African churches with legalism? (Rev. 3:16.)

*To the African pastors:*

In administering church discipline do you stand under that self-judgment which alone empowers one to administer discipline and without which church discipline becomes dead formalism? Do you misuse the discipline of the church to undergird externally your personal authority? Does this not become a necessity for you because you lack the spiritual authority which is the basis for being able to hear confession and give absolution? Are you not lacking this spiritual authority simply because you do not allow yourselves to be counseled and helped spiritually? (I Cor. 9:27.)

*To the missionary:*

All these questions are also addressed to you. But in addition: Why do you insist on church discipline in Africa when it is not insisted upon in your home churches? Have you not become guilty, not only of hypocrisy (Matt. 23:4) but also of arrogance? Have you not adopted the argument that the Africans in their "younger" churches cannot actually understand the depth of the message of St. Paul and the Reformation? For this reason have you then not tried to translate the paradoxes of the gospel into simple pedagogical common sense? (Matt. 23:13.)

*To the theological schools and mission seminaries:*

Do you give practical enough guidance to your students with respect to the cure of souls, without which, even with the best of theological education on the part of the pastor, no living congregation can be built up? (Mark 16:18; John 20:23; Acts 20:31.)

*To the laymen:*

Do you practice the Lutheran doctrine of the priesthood of all believers? Do you take upon yourselves the responsibility for the mutual cure of souls? Or are you in reality non-Lutheran and unbiblical in turning over this whole area to the pastors? (Gen. 4:9; James 5:16, 19, 20.)

## CHURCH DISCIPLINE IN THE AFRICAN CHURCHES

STEFANO MOSHI\*

From my Christian point of view I believe that church discipline is biblical; and this view represents the thinking of many Christian nationals. Church discipline is ordained by God. Therefore the church's reputation would suffer badly without it, just as it does if it is abused. The following scriptural verses prove that church discipline is biblical: *Matt. 18:15-18; I Cor. 5:5-6; Gal. 6:1; II Thess. 3:6, 14, 15; Rev. 2:2-14; I Cor. 5:11-13; Eph. 5:11-13.*

From these Bible passages we learn that the purposes of church discipline are as follows:

1. To reform and save the brother or sister who has fallen.
2. To prevent the contamination of sin from ruining others.
3. To preserve the church's order because God is the God of order.
4. To make the church's confession and the truth to which she witnesses clear and unequivocal.

Sincere Christian nationals do not question the necessity of church discipline. We feel that it is a vital part of the church's doctrine, and we are very sorry for any relaxation of church discipline in any church.

1. *The kinds of church discipline exercised by the churches in Africa.* From my experience in the part of Africa where I come from, the following kinds of church discipline have been used by our churches: (a) minor excommunication; (b) greater excommunication; (c) exclusion from the Holy Communion; (d) fines (money, animal, or manual work); (e) confession before the congregation or privately; (f) attending catechumen's classes again for months; (g) suspension for a period of months; (h) penal seats in the church; (i) admonition and reproof.

Some items of this list are no longer in use but are responsible, nevertheless, for abuses and the wrong impressions still held by Africans about church discipline, as you will see later on in this paper.

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\* Pastor Stefano Moshi, Secretary, LWF Commission on World Mission, President, Lutheran Church of Northern Tanganyika, Tanganyika, East Africa

2. *How church discipline is applied.* It is impossible to give full details of this in such a short paper, but I shall try to give you just a little picture.

- a) The guilty person, living in open sin, is examined before the congregational council, which is presided over by a pastor or pastors and the church elders. The guilty person may be either called to appear before the council, or he (or she) may come of his (or her) own accord to confess his (or her) guilt.
- b) If it is private confession, the fallen brother is examined by the pastor only, and his problem is privately settled.
- c) In the matter of open sin, the fallen brother or sister is announced before the congregation as having committed such and such a sin; therefore, he is being put under minor excommunication until his repentance is assured. This is done so as to make the non-Christian know that such conduct is not accepted by the church and that it is not according to Christian teaching. When he repents, it is announced before the congregation again and he or she is received into church membership. This is to make the congregation know that we have gained our lost brother or sister again.
- d) Admonition or reproof may be given openly or privately by the pastor or church elder.
- e) The congregational council has to decide what kind of discipline should be used for different cases, except in the matter of private confession.

3. *How church discipline has been abused.* From the list given above of kinds of discipline, you will see that some of the items in the list have led people to think that church discipline is *punishment* or *legalism* rather than the reformation and salvation of a fallen brother. Note the items like "fines" (money, animal, or manual work), attending catechumen's class again for months, disgraceful seats in church. Although such disciplines are not exercised any longer, they have unfortunately left a false impression in the minds of many lay people and leaders as well. Because of such impressions, you find in many cases that *church discipline has been changed into legalism*. One can see that in congregational councils laws and customs are more closely observed than the repentance of the sinner. Sometimes there is true repentance, but the sinner has to satisfy the law or the customs before he is received into church membership again. Sometimes there may not be any sign of repentance, but since the sinner has satisfied the law or custom, church membership is restored to him.

In not a few instances one can find that the leaders of the congregation have become guilty of what Jesus warns against in *Matt. 7:1-5*.

They have become judges, and imposed judgment upon their poor fellow sinners, using hard language, rebuking without love and mercy.

Sometimes there has been a tendency to use church discipline for personal reprisal, or for favoring a friend or great man. It is found easier to impose church discipline upon a lowly person than upon a great man; it is also easier to impose it on the uneducated than on the educated, for if discipline is to satisfy law or custom, it sometimes is illogical and is questioned by educated people.

#### *4. Dangers facing the church*

- a)* Many Christians have been prone to think that by satisfying something that they call "law or custom" they may obtain forgiveness without thinking much about true repentance. On the other hand, the leaders of the congregation, too, are inclined to think that one who has satisfied the church's discipline has been forgiven.
- b)* Many educated people, especially those who have been to Europe or America, begin to question whether church discipline is biblical, because they see that the parent churches do not use such discipline. Therefore they strongly oppose it, and are much offended.
- c)* There are many backsliders who do not join the church because they hate being made to stand before the congregation, and they also hate this business of announcing and being tried before the congregational council.

#### *5. The benefit of having church discipline*

- a)* Church discipline has been a great help in the church in making many backsliders think about their sins and the judgment of God upon them. One can meet many who are living in sins, but because they have not been suspended from the church, they think they are all right and the same as other Christians.
- b)* When we exercise church discipline, non-Christians see that we really mean what the Bible teaches. Whenever they see a Christian living in sin they wait to see what the church will do to show that it does not agree with such a life.
- c)* It also prevents weak Christians from relaxing in Christian living; it makes them fight against sins, avoiding anything which tempts them to sin.

Therefore I feel that church discipline should be preserved by the church. Some revisions are, however, necessary in order to make it correspond to the present situation and to Bible teaching. We would ask the parent churches not to relax from this important aspect of our theology, keeping in mind that more and more Christians from the younger churches will contact them in Europe and America.

## 6. How biblical church discipline should be applied in the church in contemporary Africa

From my experience and my knowledge of the Bible on this subject, I would suggest the following:

- a) Private confession should be settled by the pastor privately, and this should be between the pastor and confessor and God alone.
- b) In case of open sin, where it is felt that *minor excommunication* is necessary, a fallen brother or sister should be invited before the pastor and very few church elders, and be notified of his or her stand in the church, but it should not be announced before the church. (This should be done only after some pastoral talks to this fallen brother or sister, and when it has been discovered that there is indication of repentance which is not yet ripe, because some obstacles have not yet been removed.)
- c) Greater excommunication should be a grave thing. It should not be done until after many attempts by the pastor to try to get this brother to repent of his sin. After all, if he still resists and despises the will of God and his salvation through Jesus Christ, and if there is no indication of faith in Jesus' salvation, then it should be announced before the church with earnestness that he is no longer our brother in Christ (*Matt. 18:17*).
- d) When a sinner repents, asks for forgiveness, this should be announced before the church as good news for all of us, together with the angels in heaven.
- e) In receiving a repentant brother into full membership in the church, it should be optional to him whether he feels it should be done before the pastor with a few of the church elders, or before the church (congregation). If he has been received before the pastor and the elders, it should then be announced before the church as good news.



The railway station in Antsirabe.

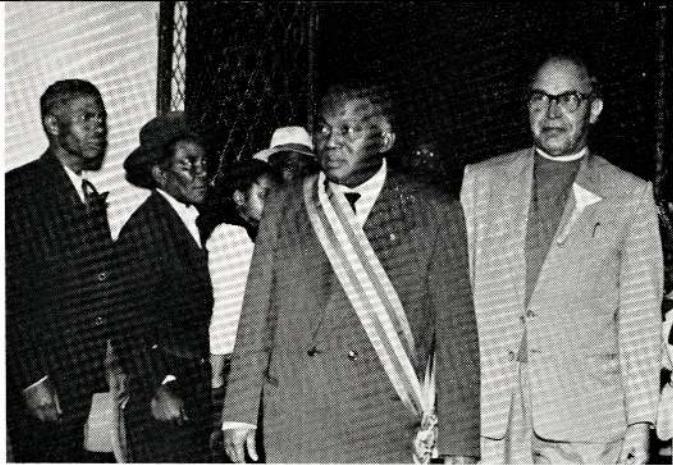


Professor Andrianarijaona addressing the plenary. Pastor Stefano Moshi and His Excellency Emmanuel Abraham presiding.



College Lutherien, at Antsirabe, where the conference met.

His Excellency, Philibert Tsiranana, President of the Malagasy Republic, and Bishop Heinrich Meyer, Chairman of the Commission on World Mission of the LWF.



Some of the non-African participants:  
Fridtjov Birkeli, Francis Bedford, Heinrich Meyer, Fredrik A. Schiotz.

The newly enlarged Holy Trinity Church, Antsirabe. This is the largest Protestant church in Madagascar, seating some 3,000 people. Public meetings for the congregations were held on most evenings.



## THE TASK OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN AFRICA TODAY

ALEXANDER TSHONGWE\*

All the changes that Africa has undergone are ascribed to the gospel. The African had had high hopes, for in the gospel he saw liberation and immediate alleviation. It was to give him the same status as that of a European. To him it was a matter of being civilized. Education, the caring for the sick, and mission farms were misunderstood as means for bringing the gospel or rather misinterpreted as the gospel itself. And such things indeed helped to inflame this expectation. The cross of Christ was overshadowed. Thus when he saw that his hopes and dreams were not fulfilled, and that the green pasture he envisioned could not be reached, the African suspected the gospel and doped himself with the conclusion that it was meant to make him smart under the rod of colonialism. The African is submissive, somewhat of an imitator, and ready to give up when there is a call for endurance. (Sorry to say, this weakness has been discovered and has been effectively used, something which I consider unjust and un-Christian, making use of somebody's weakness!) He gave up the gospel. In most cases the acceptance of the gospel was a matter of imitation rather than of conviction. We cheated ourselves trying to cheat the gospel. The consequences are despair and chaos.

It is simply a deception to lay too much emphasis on the political issues as the reason for the resistance of the African to the gospel, although it cannot be denied that this also plays a part in the life of our people. It would be wise now to attempt to see where the real resistance lies. The truth has been withheld too long and it has done us no good, although it is well-known. But the African has never admitted it and thus he has never got help.

The gospel is resisted by the African in *three* ways. It is first of all the *revival of ancestor worship*. The old customs have become an ideal.

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\* Pastor Alexander Tshongwe, Evangelical Lutheran Church—Zulu-Xhosa-Swazi Region, South Africa

There is something deeper behind the mere words "Africa for the Africans." In my observations and in my consultations with teachers, pastors, and the uneducated men and professional people of different denominations, there was no time when I found a clear break with ancestor worship. One teacher said: "I strongly believe that the ancestors should be respected and honored. What they demand (i.e. sacrifice) should be done. Christianity has nothing to do with my ancestor, while it tells the Jews of Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, and even the kings of Judah." And what has inflamed this ideal so much is the Covenant Day celebrated by the Europeans in South Africa on the 16th of December. Our Christians are governed by spirits and dreams; they have returned to the fear of bad omens. I can count a few Lutheran Christians who have become witch doctors who claim and firmly believe that the ancestor spirit has called them. Ancestor worship has gone out through the back door and has returned through the front door and has been received as angelic; the sects are an easy outlet and have laid a pattern upon which the recognized churches are building.

The second thing is *the power of magic*. Whatever you may call it, it still holds many a mind. This power has been dismissed as foolish, stupid, and superstitious, and not much attention was paid to it. The means to fight against it were lacking, for how can you fight belief by simply waving your hand and laughing at it? The proclamation of the gospel did not root it out but simply drove it underground, and it has become one of the most deadly weapons the Devil is using. In these days it has been whitewashed as "African Science" and it has come to dominate both pastor and laity. The African is still clinging treacherously to his magic. And it is no use for a pastor to stand and condemn this by mere words. We are fighting against a belief, and the struggle is difficult when the facts are not out and at the same time the pastor secretly adheres to this belief.

The third thing is the *rites connected with death and burial*, the ceremonial cleansing of the mourners. There is a sort of new development arising from a disorganized society, the intermingling of tribes and customs, and especially the European influence, or "Christian" burials. The African pastor has been compelled to participate in these ceremonies, and it is here that the separatists have a tremendous influence. By collecting and observing all rites and customs, corrupt though they are, they appeal to our church members since they are still deeply rooted in them.

It is here I see the main issues. How is the Church in Africa going to meet them? From this point we have to find out what is our task in the Church, and how to go about it.

## THE TASK OF THE CHURCH AND ITS THEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN AFRICA

The main questions asked here are: Does the gospel speak to the African in a language he understands or does it fail to answer the questions he is asking? There is this thought, that the gospel is reasoned and thought out in European terminology, as based on European culture and natural endowments that are strange and foreign to an African. Should we rethink theology in the light and background of the African? There seem to be these suggestions: Divorce the African from scientific theology to a simple translation of the gospel, since he is still intellectually behind; or let him develop and build his own theology. There is some truth in this, and it is true that the gospel is foreign to the African, just as it was to any nation, even to the Jews! But what makes it more foreign to us is that it found an Africa with no valid culture and that it is explained, reasoned, and thought out in the Western individualist way of thinking and that it removed the African from his community, singling him out. Thus he has failed to see the importance of a Christian community. It should have taken him *away* from a community *back into* a community. What he sees of the church now is a fantastic organization of individuals run by clever people.

This is true. But if the problem is approached from this angle it would be entirely wrong. We have to see that the African has lost all and has adopted the standards of the West. And if it is thought that he will be molded, he will refuse, for he is already clinging tooth and nail to what has been given to him. If the African is honest with himself, he will openly admit that he is in a dilemma. He seems not to know as yet what he is looking for. He feels the need and yet is not certain what it is; and to make matters worse, our European brothers are constantly suggesting and deciding what will work best for us. Also, the African is not without blame. He has always expressed himself with such vague terms and always with a changing face so that it has been difficult to understand him. Thus what is suggested and thought out for him finds expression in these vague statements of his.

In my personal view it is not so much scientific theology and the rest, but it is the right approach to the African that has not been found yet. His ways of thinking are such that you think you have him and yet still you don't. He seems to agree with you and yet he doesn't. I am an African and I still don't understand myself. If the right thing is found, the rest will be easy. And who shall find it? Certainly not our European brother! But let the African find it himself! Educate him! Just what is the good of divorcing him from the already acquired knowledge of which he does not know even one-fourth? Although

our brothers are sincerely seeking and thinking to find a way for us, I don't care how good it is, we shall fail to develop it, for it is not a self-product. It would be just like a parrot repeating, "No doubt about that!"

### THEOLOGICAL TRAINING IN AFRICA

In dealing with the training in Africa I do not mean to minimize the work that has been done by the seminaries. But I have to say, so far it is wanting. So far it has failed to produce creative students—a degree, whoever has it, is a matter of prestige. It is true that both missionaries and African pastors are dissatisfied with theological training, and the proof of this is found: (a) in the increase in number of students sent abroad. Some go there without even going through the prescribed course in the local seminaries—a step in the wrong direction. I would understand if they went abroad to specialize. I would be a fool to deny that our secular education is low. But this process (sending students abroad) is delaying the improvement of the local seminaries. (b) The request of the Marangu conference in 1955 to establish a seminary in Africa. Why was such a seminary necessary if the local seminaries had done a good job?

What I have discovered in our local seminaries is that they require blind obedience from their students and that there has been selection of older people as candidates. This has been just like filling a bucket with water. And believe me, we have been "faith" pastors. In this way freedom was limited. The student was not allowed to look over the fence. Thus thinking was arrested. I would challenge you to find any African pastor who is a heretic by conviction resulting from his studies and who finally rejects St. Augustine and holds the view of Pelagius on the doctrine of sin and grace! When our seminaries can produce heretics, not through ignorance but by conviction, then I would say the African is beginning to think. I do not advocate for the Devil—don't misunderstand me. The African should be trained to take the initiative to do things himself. I am sure, if given the right training, he will find his way.

If the African student is to be helped to be of future help to the African church:

- a) The African student should be led in such a way that after seminary he can continue to study.
- b) Let the student contribute to his study in the seminary the cost of his training. Let the church lend him money, and if he must repay it he shall learn to value the time and use it profitably, even if he has to pay half the cost.

- c) Open scholarships for the best, selecting them from the seminary. To me it is ability that counts, not only that a person is educated but that he will be able to do something with what he has been given.
- d) The time should be extended in the local seminaries to 6 years. If the student can do it in 4 years, good! But he should work for himself, not having to wait for the teacher to find things for him, like filling a bucket. The seminaries should not teach us to be faithful Lutherans but let this come by itself and as *one's own decision*.

We have already pointed out the question: "Does the gospel fail to answer questions the African is asking?" As a matter of fact, it's not the *message* but rather the *messenger*. There is a great truth in *Matt. 13:52*. Some of us are over twenty-five years of age and have failed to see the present needs of our people. We have tried to answer every question by simply giving the solution of sin. What I have observed is this: The pastor has become a tyrant. The gospel lost its dynamic and became a rod of chastisement. Since the pastor has been so highly elevated he has lost touch with the common people. He lives in a world of his own. Since he seems to be recognized by both missionary and government he has been suspected as a government official. So far we have failed to put across the message to our people and failed to be true witnesses for Jesus. We have tried to build large congregations, and the methods that we use overshadowed our true goal. The gospel can answer and does answer the real issue, but when a right thing is in the wrong hand it becomes wrong too. And thus we are losing many educated people in the church.

### THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CHURCH AND THE MISSIONARIES

On the surface the relationship seems healthy, but in reality it is not. And the African, rather than coming into the open, hides. Why does he hide? I have this impression: The African has discovered that the European brothers do not want to hear about what the African has produced from the African and his own individual point of view. But the missionary wants him to carry out and support that which the missionary has thought out. In this way the African has been discouraged rather than encouraged.

It is generally known and believed that the missionaries are giving way to African leadership, and this is partly true in some respects and partly false in others. In the past, the elder brother (the missionary) was directly the leader, but now he is indirectly still the leader. He has become an adviser, avoiding the word supervision. He it is who still

determines everything and this later development, if not arrested in time, will in the future cause more frustration than the original one, especially when we view the political development in Africa. Look what happened in China: the expulsion of missionaries and the turning of so many Chinese Christian leaders against their former missionary friends. We do not want this to happen in Africa if we can help it. But this can only be avoided, provided the missionaries open their ears. The elder brother has become an administrator, an organizer, a machine to plan. There are very few of them that will be willing to serve directly under the leadership of an African and this gives the impression that they, too, are also of the opinion of the world. I will never forget in 1947, before I was a pastor, I happened to hear a prayer from a European woman. In her prayer she said, "O God forsake us not and give us not into the hands of a kaffir" (i.e., an African). It is not my aim to hurt, but I only want to bring out what hampers a healthy relationship if we have to stand side by side in doing the work.

I see no valid reasons why missionaries, well educated in secular education, in theology, and especially with their Christian background, have to be sitting in the office as administrators, attending endless committees and simply administrating on Sundays the Holy Communion. It is like training a pilot in all modern warfare and while the war is still on, sending him to go and sell petrol in a filling station. He could have done better if he had gone to the front line. What the missionary is doing now is to deal with the 99 that are already within the fold. I doubt if there are more than ten missionaries who have won a single soul for Christ. I am sorry to have to say that the African pastor, too, has become an administrator, who also now wants everything on a platter. The mistake the missionaries are making now is to criticize and formulate glorious ideas and infuse into our minds what they think the church should be. I have observed that the mission fields are becoming battlefields. Each wants it in his own way and this strife is like father and mother fighting in front of their eight-year-old son, calling each other names and throwing mud at each other. The missionaries should try and avoid this. Wait with your advice, wait with your suggestions until we ask for them, unless you think you are dealing with a block of wood. You can make a child a good-for-nothing if you always think and decide for him. Personally I hate it. The missionaries' main concern is to *witness for Christ*. Why take so much care for the lesser and leave out the main issue? Let the missionary return to the original plan which his predecessors followed. They are cited as faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ. I think what will be of great help in this age for building a better relationship is this:

- a) Let the missionary and his family be part of the congregation and let him be entirely under the synod as a member and as one responsible to the synod. The time is too critical to let this go unchallenged.
- b) Especially these missions should be abolished to which the missionary clings tooth and nail. There is no question that people remember their land. But there is something deeper here. For most of the ideas that are put to us come from those mission conferences and they are a separation from our church. If the missionary has been called and has chosen to stay with us, let him act in that way. I don't mean to Africanize him. To me these mission conferences mean one thing: a refusal of the missionaries to be part of one church. I was once speaking to an Afrikaner, a Nationalist, without deception. I asked him, "Why are you Afrikaners anti-British?" He replied, "If the British cannot make themselves at home with us here in Africa, why don't they pack their suitcases and return home?" Let the missionary make himself at home, too!
- c) It is necessary that the mission boards abroad should change their attitude. For everything that is done by the missionary has been directed by letter from the mission board abroad of which I never read nor see a copy. Again and again, we cannot go against the mission board's decision. I know they have the right. But this arouses untold questions, especially this statement one missionary made, "Even if the mission board decides, it cannot go against our recommendations."
- d) Politically the missionary has become a coward to save his skin. I know they have hell and have been criticized by their fellow Europeans as "kaffir brother," the most horrible name that can be given to a European. All the same, they have failed to share and sympathize with their fellow Christians. You cannot hide love, but they have a different attitude, for they will always stand and shelter their brother. I bring this quotation: Once a missionary asked openly this question: "Which is better for the Africans—for the missionary to have fellowship with them and be chased out of the country, or is it better to remain and preach the gospel?" I take my hat off to a missionary who has been chased out of the country rather than sacrifice his conscience on the altar of un-Christian practice.
- e) It has been observed that the missionaries do not want to mix or mingle freely with the African Christians and this is easily noticed at the celebration of the Holy Communion. At this time automatically they have their group that partakes of the cup first. If the cup cannot unite us and make us forget our differences, what on earth can unite us? It is these little things that speak louder than words. Let us try and avoid them.

f) Again and again it has been noticed that the missionaries have gathered round themselves faithful pastors whom they think they can get along with. And these pastors have been used against their own people so as to carry out the missionary's will. In this way they have deprived other congregations of the different talents bestowed upon certain people which, if circulated, would have benefited the church. At the same time they have broken the will of the people. There is a kind of missionary who, when he goes to a certain congregation, it feels that a tyrant is coming. But because the African is very good in flattering someone, the Africans are never found out and this destroys faith and turns it into hypocrisy. When the missionary is disliked, it springs from the Christians themselves. It would be wise for a missionary to try not to offend the congregation. Once he has lost the confidence of the people he has lost all.

### CONCLUSIONS

Upon this background, I would say, to rebuild the church in Africa:

- a) *We must fight against ignorance.* We can attempt this by working through Bible schools. Establish as many Bible schools as can be managed financially. But not only these Bible institutions. Each pastor should be assisted in each diocese to carry out some form of voluntary instruction given to everybody, Christians, non-Christians and members of the sects or separatists. Bring the separatists and their leaders closer, for they are a deadly enemy to our Christian faith. The pastor should come down to the level of the people.
- b) *We must fight against ancestor worship, magic, and superstition.* Some special attention should be paid to this. Let the African pastor go deep and investigate. Bring to the open this dreadful mystery in the form of books and pamphlets. Some pastors should be given this task, if carefully selected, to work hard to get this in the open. In the future training in our seminaries, all available books on this subject should be made use of. But I doubt if a European can teach this subject, for the Africans will withhold many a thing and won't come out openly, and we shall not be able to fight against these evils. For what we need is to get at the heart of the African and surely here we need diplomats.
- c) *The African has to be educated in the highest theology as can be acquired.* If the pattern of Marangu Seminar could be followed to some extent, it could prove itself workable to the local seminaries. I am sure if Marangu could have been given a period of 4 years and the students had been carefully selected it would have done wonders.

I think we should have in Africa two kinds of training. (1) Theological training should be given to the most carefully selected students, so to say: the cream of African people, who can make something out of their studies. People might have education but no ability. (2) The less intellectual should undergo Bible school for at least three years.

d) *Let us try and build a healthy relationship between the missionaries and congregation, especially the African pastor.* I disapprove of this idea that the missionary is working to work himself out of a job, that he is as a "scaffold." Nor do I consider him as a partner. I think this is all crazy and makes the church to the African a foreign institution. Let us get away from these ideas! The African pastor and the missionary in the congregation, black or white, they should stand as Peter and John stood before Jesus.

I cannot overemphasize the point that the approach to the African with the gospel is very important. The task of the church in Africa today is: "Therefore go ye out into the whole of Africa and make *true* disciples of all Africans." As simple as that.

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

## THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS

EMMANUEL ABRAHAM\*

It is almost five years ago that the first All-Africa Lutheran Conference met at Marangu, Tanganyika. Those of us who were present at that conference thought it was wonderful at that time that so many Africans and their friends from the other continents could assemble to discuss a matter of paramount and lasting interest for all Africans, namely, preaching Christ among the peoples of Africa. I am very happy and thankful that I have again been given the privilege of attending the second All-Africa Lutheran Conference in this lovely island of Madagascar. I would like to congratulate most heartily our brothers from Madagascar on their country's attainment of independence and hope from the bottom of my heart that the Malagasy people will be successful in preserving their freedom in all its aspects. Above all, I would hope that their new-found freedom will be crowned by that freedom which can only be attained through faith in our Lord Jesus.

In November 1955 when I had the privilege of addressing the first All-Africa Lutheran Conference at Marangu, I expressed joy and gratitude at the prospect of Africa being freed from alien rule and new nations arising in Western as well as Eastern Africa. We have all been overjoyed since at witnessing the Sudan, Tunisia, and Morocco joining the ranks of free nations in 1956; Ghana in 1957; Guinea in 1958; and in this year of grace 1960 we have so far seen that Cameroun, Togoland, The Mali Federation, Madagascar, The Belgian Congo, and Somalia have achieved political independence. Only last month the former French West and Equatorial African territories of Dahomey, The Ivory Coast, the Niger and Upper Volta, together with Chad, The Central African Republic, The Republic of The Congo and Gabon, were given international status as independent nations. And before the year is out we look forward to welcoming Nigeria and Mauritania into the ever-growing fraternity of free African nations. I may mention that Sierra Leone in West Africa has been promised independence for April 1961;

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\* Mr. Emmanuel Abraham, Diplomat and Government Official, Ethiopian Evangelical Church—Mekane Yesus, Ethiopia

and that Tanganyika and Uganda are expected to attain free nationhood in the near future. At this rate we may expect most of Africa to be free from alien domination within the next decade.

It is deeply to be regretted that the Republic of The Congo was beset with grave disturbances almost immediately after her attainment of independence, but it is matter for much gratification that the United Nations have been able to go to her rescue with commendable dispatch as a result of which peace and security are being restored to the Congoland and the cause of collective security vindicated. The co-operation and prompt action of the member states of the United Nations to rush all kinds of assistance to the Congo is a measure of the anxiety of world opinion for peace and of the truth of the dictum, "Peace is indivisible." It is a sad commentary on colonialism that the people of the Congo should find themselves utterly unprepared to run their own affairs after eighty years of European tutelage. It is said that the Belgians, being intent on the economic exploitation of that rich African country, hardly gave any attention to the human element and thus neglected the future welfare of the Congolese. It may be true that the Congolese are, generally speaking, economically better off than their grandfathers were when the Belgians occupied their country; but human beings being endowed with mental and spiritual faculties cannot live by bread alone, and the Congolese showed their deep resentment at being treated like beasts of burden by attacking at the first opportunity the citizens of the colonial power which they held responsible for their helpless state. It is my earnest hope that, with the sympathetic assistance of the peoples of Africa and the world, the people of the Congo will soon find their equanimity and balance and that they will, before long, stand on their own feet with assurance and ability.

I may say in passing that we in Ethiopia have witnessed with sorrow the tragic loss of many African lives in South Africa, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and Algeria during the past few years, due mainly to man's inhumanity to man and the insistence of sections of the populations of those countries that they belong to a superior race ordained by providence to lord it over the black peoples of Africa. As an Evangelical Christian and as an African who belongs to a nation that has throughout history proved false the political and even religious theory that because of the fairness of his skin one type of man is superior to another type, I may be allowed to tell you of my credo that, believing as I do the words of Holy Scripture that God made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, there can be no superior race on this earth. It is true that circumstances, geographic, climatic, and others, may arouse some peoples to greater efforts and achievements than others; but that does not change

the essential equality of human beings wherever they may live on this planet and whatever the color of their skins may be. I am glad to note that this is the view not only of scientists but also of most of mankind and especially of those who belong to the so-called white race and who look at the problem dispassionately and without blind prejudice; and I hope and pray that that section of the white race which is obsessed by the notion of superiority will see the error of its ways and modify its policy which is doing so much harm, both physical and spiritual, to millions of Africans in Southern Africa and which if persisted in may bring in its train a terrible racial holocaust.

We may justly rejoice at the sight of African peoples regaining their political freedom one after the other. The Scripture says: "Where there is the spirit of Christ there is liberty. I would like to pay tribute here to those Christian missionaries from many lands who for over a century have helped to impart the knowledge of Christ and his love to so many Africans in all parts of the continent. I am sure it is a matter of deep satisfaction to these missionaries to note that many of the new African leaders who have taken or are taking up the reigns of government both in Western and Eastern Africa are men who went to mission schools and were fired by the spirit of Christ, the spirit of liberty, which has engendered in their hearts the love of freedom and given them the ideal as well as the endurance to fight for it to the end.

But what about Africa's spiritual freedom? Are African peoples as eager to achieve spiritual freedom as they are to attain political freedom? I think my missionary friends are better able to answer this question than I, having labored among Africans in all parts of the continent for so long, but from what I can make out from a distance I may say that it is a much harder task to convince the peoples of Africa of the desirability of attaining spiritual freedom. This in my view is mainly because their warfare is not only against flesh and blood but against the god of this world himself. But I think the task is made still harder for European and American missionaries as in most parts of Africa the message of the gospel was first carried to Africans by white people and, nationalism and racialism being rampant all over the continent, the blessed message of redemption was taken and is still being taken as part of the white man's tactics for dominating Africa and the Africans. I think it was a Kenya African who is reported to have remarked: The white man came to Africa preaching about heaven and, while the African looked up to heaven, grabbed the land in which he had lived for so long. This is, of course, an extreme case where bitterness against the deeds of a certain type of white man has blinded the African's eyes to the benefits brought

to Africa by the gospel. But it is true that the conflicting roles played by white people in Africa have confused the African mind so much that many have found it practically impossible to differentiate between the political and economic exploiters and the bearers of the gospel of love and salvation. In this I submit that the African is echoing unconsciously but effectively the surprised and pained query of the Apostle James when he said, "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?" It is my earnest hope and prayer, however, that now that the political white man is fading away from Africa and the African is coming back to his own with dignity, our peoples will see the difference more clearly between the messenger of God's Kingdom and the messengers of earthly kingdoms who are intent on exploiting them and that they will realize once and for all that the Bible is not the white man's book but the oracle of God's love to man whether he be an African, an Asian, a European, or an American.

Fellow Christians, what I am trying to say is that the restoration to Africans of their freedom and independence should help to open the hearts and minds of multitudes of Africans to the gospel more than ever before, by removing the prejudices and hatreds created by the master and servant relationships engendered by colonialism. I am not overlooking the fact that it is bound to take time to blot out the effects of colonialism and exploitation from the African's mind, but I dare to hope that the Christian love, which every missionary and every Christian foreigner living in Africa may show to Africans by the way they speak, act, and live among them, will go a long way in removing any suspicions and skepticism that may be lingering in their minds because of the deeds of foreigners who were mistakenly taken to be Christians by Africans but in truth worshiped other gods and thereby damaged or even destroyed the witnesses of the men and women of their race who had given their lives to worshiping the true God and telling of his love to those who were in darkness. This is not going to be an easy task, but with the spread of education and the attainment of national freedom in Africa, I have no doubt that Africans will in time learn to discriminate more wisely between their friends and foes, and I would therefore recommend to my brothers and sisters from Europe and America who are laboring among Africans to be of good cheer and to renew their efforts in fulfilling the task of preaching the gospel. It is an encouraging sign that in Africa, as in other parts of the world, native Christians are taking more share in the task of preaching the gospel among their own peoples. I would like to say to fellow African Christians that we have to realize more than ever before that it is incumbent on us to recognize our great responsibility to our fellow Africans who are without Christ and so to trade with the talents given

us by our Master as to deserve praise and entrance into the joy of our Lord upon his return. In so doing, we shall be giving more and more confidence to our peoples that the Bible is not the white man's book but the revelation of God's love to mankind and of his plan to get them reconciled to himself and regain their lost estate.

Finally, I would like to say a few words on the theme of the second All-Africa Lutheran Conference, namely, "Jesus Christ: the Way, the Truth and the Life." I have no doubt that we shall hear a lot on this theme in the course of the conference. For thousands of years, blinded by Satan, mankind has been yearning and groping to find the way back to God, but millions have found instead that at the end of the road they believed to be genuine were disillusionment and death. It was and still is the ingenuity and wisdom of man to find the true way to God, so much so that it became imperative for God to appear in the form of man to show man the true way to himself. I would like to testify to my brothers and sisters in Christ here assembled that Jesus Christ is indeed the Truth and that all other types of truth must be gauged by this central Truth of the universe without whom life is meaningless and all other truths are irrelevant travesties. He, and he alone, can lead man to life, not only to life in the ordinary sense but to eternal life which commences with God when we accept the Lord Jesus into our hearts and which only God in the form of man could ensure by bridging the deep gulf between himself and man.

Allow me to consider briefly how this theme is related to the situation obtaining in our continent of Africa today. Most of our peoples are groping and toiling in darkness to find the way of life that is worth-while, both in the physical and spiritual sense. They are also groping to find the truth that will satisfy their innermost beings. Many are turning their backs to the old beliefs of their fathers which they have found wanting, and are going to school where they are fed with many theories about life, to which many Europeans and Americans have turned after having for the most part abandoned the faith of their fathers to pursue the teaching of science so-called, which is effectively robbing them of their peace of mind and spirit, and leading them to hopelessness. The average African, looking up to the European and the American as his models and deeply bent on procuring the scientific and technological know-how at which the Western man excels and which the African greatly longs to possess, feels bound to acquire at the same time the political, economic, religious, and other theories expounded by Western man. He is attracted by the ideologies and "isms" such as socialism, communism, and agnosticism, which have been swaying Europe and America for a generation or more. How then could the people of Africa benefit from the West's amazing scientific and tech-

nological achievements without at the same time being trapped by false beliefs and philosophies and thereby losing their souls and, in the final analysis, making their labors fruitless and their lives meaningless? I submit that the only way is the preaching of the gospel of Christ among the African peoples with apostolic zeal. The Lord Jesus says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." It is my firm belief that African civilization during the next few centuries will be of a very high order if our peoples accept the blessed gospel and take the Lord Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life, and if they base their thoughts and deeds on the will of our Heavenly Father. This is a great challenge to us Christians assembled here and to the millions of Lutheran Christians the world over who, though not here with us physically, are, I feel sure, with us in spirit tonight and will continue to be with us until the end of the conference. The peoples of Africa are awake and determined to acquire a better, a freer, and a fuller life than hitherto. It is incumbent on us, the followers of Christ, to spare no effort to see to it that they obtain real life and march on the right way fortified by the eternal truth which will help them to conform to the eternal purpose of the Triune God.

May the Lord Jesus bless our gathering here together for the next few days by sending us the Spirit of Truth to lead us to himself who is the Way, the Truth and the Life so that we may go forth by his grace as illumined arrows guiding our fellow men to his eternal Kingdom.

*SECTION I*  
*THE WORLD WE SERVE*

## THE CHURCH AND CHANGING AFRICA

CHRISTIAN BAETA\*

In view of the vastness of the subject "Changing Africa" it is helpful that our topic limits us to a consideration only of those aspects of the matter that directly affect the life and work of the church. Even so, it is not easy to speak on this subject because there is so much to say that one does not know where to begin. In fact, if the means were available, a whole conference should be devoted to just this theme alone, rather than merely one address. As responsible Africans, we are ourselves, of course, most deeply involved in what is taking place. As shepherds and prophets of the flock of God, our duty clearly and rightly to understand and to interpret the signs of the time is plain and compelling. But by no means is all this something that concerns us alone. Someone has written recently: "The future of mankind depends upon the way men handle the emergence of Africa and the East into conscious independent power." You have only, for example, to consider the implications and possible consequences of the recent threatened call of the premier of the Congo for Russian armed assistance, to realize that these words are not an overstatement, and to see the extreme seriousness of the whole situation.

*To begin with*, I think that we might well ask the question: Just what is it that is happening? We are not thereby inquiring after the particular events in the various territories or the personalities most prominently involved in them. I believe that it is not putting things too simply to say that, at base, what is happening is that the Negro African has discovered himself as a man like all other men, a person like all other persons.

When Europeans and Africans came into contact with one another, the material wealth and technical skill of the former were so much greater than those of the latter that both sides drew the conclusion that Africans, as men, were vastly inferior to Europeans. This opinion was

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\* Professor Christian Baëta, Chairman, International Missionary Council, Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Ghana, West Africa

built up in course of time with a whole barrage of half-truths and myths, e.g., that Africans were peoples without a history; that before the coming of the Europeans they had made no cultural advance beyond the Stone Age; that they were inherently primitive because they never invented the wheel or developed the art of writing; that intellectually they were and would permanently remain mere children; that only Europeans could save them from self-destructive intertribal wars, or develop their territories, or raise them from barbarity to some measure of civilization, and so forth. It was assumed by Europeans and accepted by Africans that the logic of all this was the political dominance of Africans by Europeans.

Now a very deep-going psychological change has taken place in Africans. They just do not believe any more that they are in any way different from other peoples, or that the benefits which colonial powers are reputedly able to confer are a fair price to pay for the loss of political freedom. National independence is claimed as a human right, pure and simple. It is recognized that alien rule, however it may work out, necessarily assigns an inferior and therefore unworthy place to the subject nation concerned, quite apart from the fact that in the majority of cases it has actually been deliberately oppressive and insulting to them as well. If the ruling powers themselves claimed national independence as a simple right, it is hard to see why they should deny it to others. The words in the Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations soon after its inception some eleven years ago, have become an article of faith not only in respect to individuals but also to national communities: "Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. . . . Disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind."

Now one may disagree with parts or even the whole of these contentions, but I believe there can be no doubt that this is the thinking of the new generation of Africans who call themselves nationalists. I think that it is important to understand the underlying logic of this movement firstly because, in the practical expressions of it, it is usually heavily overlaid with emotion and many other factors that have only incidental relations to it; secondly, because the lack of this understanding tends to lead to an almost total breakdown of communication between the older and the younger generations within the churches. In the part of the continent from which I come, the inner rejection of European authority and leadership has gone very far indeed. And it is not a merely negative thing. Along with it goes a new strength

and self-confidence in facing the demands of life that, it must be admitted, Africans did not have before. Thus in these parts it is taken as axiomatic that each African territory still under colonial rule will sooner or later (and sooner rather than later) become independent. The days of African acquiescence in foreign rule are clearly at an end, and any foreign power desiring to continue to exercise such rule will need to do so under some form of occupation government.

*My next point* does not have to do directly with the first, but I consider it to be very important. I believe that the attention of Christian bodies should be drawn to the considerable and apparently deliberate distortion of the motivation, the historical expressions and the effects of Christian work in Africa, that is going forward at the present time. A few months ago in New York City I viewed a film of Africa made by some journalists who had toured the continent. They had a very short section on what has been called "the missionary factor." It showed a class of African boys who were being taught by an African missionary agent to sing one of the well-known Western hymn tunes. The performance was bad—the whole presentation was an almost unbearable cacophony. And that was all that was shown of Christian work in the entire film.

In the context of stirring developments in politics and other secular fields the role of Christianity thus portrayed seemed to be so utterly irrelevant as to be ridiculous. I have met many visitors from foreign lands who, while showing a keen interest in the present movement toward a new life all over the African continent, seemed to be under the impression that Christian missions constituted some sort of hindrance to African progress and even that they probably never should have been undertaken at all.

Thus there have been quite a few books written recently in various Western countries, purporting to give accounts and interpretations of what is happening in Africa today, which presumably do not recognize any "missionary factor" at all, or seem to regard it as quite negligible. There are even those who are counseling Africans, not without considerable vehemence, that Christian missions be thrown out of the continent forthwith.

No one would wish to deny that many mistakes, including some very serious ones, have been made in the course of missionary work. Christians the world over learn with shame that even today, particularly in the areas of racial tension, there are not a few representatives of the gospel ministry who, far from trying to transform the world around them according to the mind of God, have themselves become fully conformed with the world. Just the other day I was reading about a "missionary" guest house in Africa which does not receive Africans, and we could

cite quite a few other such (as it seems to us) curiosities! Yet, of course, that is by no means the whole picture, and our youth should not be denied the true historical perspective in respect of Christian work merely by default. Many of the older mission workers among us can still, from their own memories of earlier days, tell stirring stories of love, courage, and self-sacrifice that was freely and generously poured into Christian work particularly at the initial stages, and of the great blessings which have flowed therefrom to the peoples concerned, being in many cases the chief reason why they are what they are today, able to cope with modern demands instead of being helplessly overwhelmed by them. These efforts were never undertaken in order to earn the praise or even the thanks of men, but in view of present circumstances it seems to be important for the church today and tomorrow that there should not be silence over this undeniable achievement and contribution and its very real significance.

On the other hand, we must also face squarely the points at which tensions do arise between Christian and nationalist forces. African nationalist leaders are often highly suspicious, if not of the motivation of missions, then of the psychological effect which they exert. They believe that this tends to emasculate simple-minded Africans, fostering in them the old attitudes of unquestioning subservience to Europeans. It must be admitted that some missionary leaders do nothing to allay these fears. Misled, doubtless, by the present still very lowly conditions of most Africans and by their so pressing physical needs, they are tempted to take liberties with people which really go far beyond the bounds of propriety. Then many seem to have settled into the position that the question of full and equal human and political rights for Africans can be shelved indefinitely, and accordingly do not display that passion for the removal of injurious discrimination and plain injustice that should be expected from them. Thus in their circles independence movements are viewed with extreme caution, if not definitely denounced, and while their risks and dangers are greatly expanded upon, their possible good points are not usually brought into view.

Others, taking the standpoint that the salvation of individual souls is more important than anything else, including even the national life, pursue their preaching and strictly "spiritual" nurture of their flocks as if these lived in completely isolated spiritual realms. Since in point of fact the secular framework of human life in Africa is as yet so unsatisfactory that nobody ought to be unconcerned, the apparent indifference of such missionaries in this regard is extremely hard for the national-minded to understand.

Again some missionaries, and often African agents working under their direction, seem to be unaware of the very mixed motivation of

certain policies put forward by the ruling authorities from time to time, and greatly distress knowledgeable Africans by putting idealistic interpretations upon concepts which the latter know to be anything but lofty.

It is usual to conclude an address such as mine by suggesting what should be done. I do not believe, however, that this is the most important thing here. The church knows its business, and it is the same here as everywhere else and at all times. What to do is already given, how to do it is largely a matter of common sense. The demand rather is to come to grips with the essence of our problem, without dodges or prevarication, and to make up our minds.

I have already indicated that the issue underlying African nationalism is really whether men everywhere are equal in their humanity, and should be treated accordingly, whatever their racial, cultural, and economic differences might be, or whether there should be gradation in humanity with entrenched privileges for some which are denied to others. It is in the light of this question that we must make up our minds whether the phenomenon which confronts us, namely, African nationalism, in spite of certain good points that there may be about it, really proceeds from destructive demonic forces; or whether, in spite of the very active involvement of such forces, it is in essence the doing of Almighty God himself: God the Creator and Redeemer of all human life.

## THE CHURCH AND THE GROWING CITIES

GEORGE A. SEPENG\*

The church is an assembly of people selected and called out of the world by the doctrine of the gospel to worship the true living God in Christ Jesus according to his Word.

The church is called the Bride of Christ. A bride is a virgin selected from an assembly of virgins for marriage. This selection reveals the deep love in the heart of the bridegroom. It stands to reason, therefore, that the Lord Jesus Christ has selected the assembly of Christians called the church because of deep love in his heart. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (*John 3:16*).

Evil grows as the cities grow. Almost every home becomes a brewery patronized by old and young, day in and day out. There are municipal beer halls with staggering attendance. These beer halls have been erected with the pretense of curbing illicit home brewery and sale. As true Christians, our hearts are grieved as we pass these beer halls on Sundays when we think of the empty pews in the churches of the cities. There are sports events with mighty fever, and the best day for sports competitions among Africans is Sunday. With so many means of conveyance, Sunday is the best day for nice-time journeys. There are bioscope pictures and dancing clubs with big membership and attendance.

Politics have done the church great harm. Weaker nations have become victims of local political parties. The ruling parties are haunted by fear of being overwhelmed and overpowered. They have adopted the method of retarding the progress of the weaker nations educationally and economically. The reaction of weaker nations is Sunday political meetings and demonstrations. Some missionaries and pastors have dragged the church into politics by joining some of the political parties or by speaking on behalf of a certain section of the citizens.

Hence, the church of Christ is suffering the blow of secession. We

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\* Pastor George A. Sepeng, Church Secretary, Evangelical Lutheran Batswana Church, South Africa

have sects bearing the names of the original church, such as the African Lutheran Church, Bantu Methodist Church, African Presbyterian Church, and such like. These separatists have three discrepancies. They do not train their ministers. They preach nationalism, rather than Christ. They encourage looseness rather than purity and sanctity by accepting loose Christians from original churches for the sake of membership. Thus the blind men are leading the blind.

The Moslems are doing missionary work among the African people in the cities. Like the Jews, they believe in God the Creator. They believe in Christ, but not as the Saviour and the Redeemer and the Mediator, but as an ordinary prophet under Mahomet. They believe in working for their own salvation with charity and a so-called pure life. The Indians are the first victims of this corrupted religion, and Africans and other city dwellers are following suit.

I need not dwell on the Roman Catholic Church because every Lutheran is conversant with its corrupt teachings and its methods of attracting people, especially those who are stricken with poverty and who have a weak Christian foundation. This church has a big membership. The most dangerous sects are Zionist churches and the so-called "Apostolic" churches. Their religion is a mixture of Christianity, nationalism, heathenism, polygamy, witchcraft, and John's baptism. People are called upon to slaughter animals to satisfy the spirits or to accept John's baptism in order to get false supernatural healing.

These facts are a challenge to the church. The Lord Jesus was aware of these bitter enemies when he gave his church the instruction to evangelize the world including the cities. It is not only the mission of the *church* to bring the saving gospel of Jesus Christ to the entire world, but it is the obligation of *all Christians*. Before his departure to heaven, the Lord ordered the church to go into the world and preach the gospel to every creature (*Mark 16:15*).

We do not find anywhere in the New Testament that the Lord encourages the church to sit at ease in Zion and wait for the people to come to church. The church is ordered to go to the people to call them into the church. It is therefore the duty of the church to employ every means to bring the Christians to the realization of this stupendous task. It is the duty of the church to present the crucified and resurrected Christ, who is soon to return, to all nations of the world before this day of salvation sinks into eternity. Nations of the cities must know that there is no other name under the sun whereby they can be saved besides the name of Jesus Christ the Son of God (*Acts 4:12*).

The church has crippled herself by divisions. When I say "the church," I do not mean the Lutheran Church or churches only. The Lutheran churches do not represent the church but a part of the church. By

church I mean the Universal Church. It is this Universal Church which is crippled by divisions.

It is very sad that the church, which is the body of Christ, is so divided, not by doctrine and confession, but by ideology and denominational prejudice. One of the Articles in the Augsburg Confession says that our confession of the Triune God must be the same but that the procedure, organization, and administration, made by men, need not be the same. But alas! It is procedure, organization, and administration which divide the church. Our plea is for unity of purpose.

Another weakness of the church is negligence of the valuable gift of the Gospel Church, namely, *supernatural healing*. When and where this gift became the gift of the separatist Zionists and the so-called Apostolics I do not know. Our Gospel Church believes that if she does this work of laying hands on the sick, in the name of Jesus Christ, people will join the church for health reasons only. Any servant of Christ who believes this is against his Master who did this work and said: "These signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils. . . . They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (*Mark 16:17, 18*). Neither Christ nor the apostles had any fear the present church has, that people would join the church for health reasons only. All we know is that many people healed during the time of Christ and his apostles glorified God. This fear is the creation of Satan, the enemy of God who is jealous when God is glorified. Another fear comes from unbelief. The church encourages people to go to doctors for scientific healing, but refuses to encourage them to go to Christ for supernatural healing. Yet church people are the first to complain when people go to the Zionists for physical relief. I do not believe that everybody in the Gospel Church lacks the gift of healing. What I believe is that the Gospel Church lacks faith in this particular respect. In doing so the church is driving people into the hands of the Zionist.

What the church needs is manpower. The workers are but a drop in the ocean. It is certain that the mother church for some unknown reasons was rather slow to inspan manpower to this great work. My personal experience is that where Christians are left idle, they become very indifferent and passive. A human being wants to see that he can do something. Therefore the church must give Christians something to do.

Besides ministers, missionaries, pastors, evangelists, preachers, and church leaders, we need Sunday school organizers and teachers. Parents and children should be encouraged to bring their friends to church and to Sunday school. House-to-house visitation should be encouraged. We need evangelical literature, magazines, Bible tracts, and pictures.

To accomplish this, we need funds very badly. Where should the church find money to do this good work? The church cannot depend on

bazaars, concerts, and street collections. These sources are very unreliable. Christians must be taught to sacrifice and give freely and liberally. My experience is that unsaved Christians experience very great difficulty in giving. Contributions to the church come from thankful hearts only. We thank him for saving us. If I am not saved, I have no reason to thank him. Simplicity is therefore very essential in explaining the way of salvation. If I find it difficult to explain my message, it means I do not believe it myself. If I fear to ask people to give liberally, it means I do not know why I want them to give.

The church must be governed by the Third Person of the Trinity. I want to draw the attention of this conference to the fact that God is not a respecter of human methods and power. He says in *Zechariah 4:6*, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit." We must pray for the Spirit of God to use us and our methods. In other words, we must pray for the presence of God in the Person of the Holy Spirit to abide with us in our undertaking.

## THE CHURCH AND YOUNG AFRICA

GURLI VIBE-JENSEN\*

Everywhere in Africa young people are poised between two civilizations, between two worlds, unable to see their place clearly and lacking any definite standards of life and thought. As a consequence, they easily develop a materialistic approach to life, or turn idle, leaving their leisure hours unoccupied by useful avocations or any satisfying interests. The growing rate of immorality, particularly in the cities, can be traced to this cause. There is a general thirst for education, which young people make every sacrifice to obtain, but having got it, they do not know how to interpret the Bible in relation to their scientific understanding of the world. Violently drawn into the political preoccupation of their age and country, they frequently find no time for life in the church, neither are they able to discern how God speaks through him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life to the political conflicts of Africa today. In many places, young and old find it difficult to live happily together in the church. Leadership for youth work is hard to come by. And above all, the traditional agency upon which the church has depended for its service to youth, viz., the day school, is being taken over by the governments of the different territories.

The African young person is no longer molded exclusively by his tribal environment. A wider world is opening for him. Sooner or later, directly or indirectly, he comes under its influence, in towns, mines, plantations, and other work centers; by every innovation in economic life and in technique; through contact with fellow workers; through direct intercourse with Europeans; and through measures passed by the government. These are the factors that shape his life, giving him a new outlook with new standards of value which are often not based on Christian principles.

Looking at the situation from an All-African viewpoint, questions such as the following are being asked: Why has the church, which a generation ago found its most numerous converts among young people, now has difficulty in holding these people and winning the non-Christian?

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\* Miss Gurli Vibe-Jensen, Lutheran Church of Christ in the Sudan, Nigeria

What does this fact mean to the church and its future? What can be done to breach the gulf between the older and the younger generation? How does the church's evangelism and teaching fail? How does it succeed in reaching these young people?

Adolescence represents a state of transition for most individuals in which the individual ordinarily develops independence, self-confidence, and self-reliance. It is an expansion and development from immaturity to adulthood and brings specific problems with it. An adolescent often wants the privileges of independence, for example, but is unwilling and unprepared to take on the accompanying responsibilities. The adolescent in growing up faces problems of sexual adjustment, marriage, parenthood, establishment of life goals and ambitions, the building of a philosophy of life for himself.

Here are some of the questions African youth are asking today: How can we relate Christianity to all of life? Does Christianity have an answer to the problems and tensions of daily living? How can I be a Christian in the classroom? How do my Christian ethics measure up with the ethics of the business world? What about my Christian principles and the contemporary moral scene? What do I believe? What *can* I believe? What is the purpose of life? And these questions must be answered by the church since the griefs, the joys, the disappointments, the shocks, the satisfactions, the failures, and the successes in early childhood and adolescence form the framework around which the adult personality is built.

I do not want to criticize the church's message or methods; it is not intended to minimize the church's purpose and program; but I would like to state that we must be aware of the danger of missing the true foundation within our youth work. The church must preach repentance and acceptance of Christ. We do not want youth to be carried along by a stream, but we want them to commit their lives to Christ in a personal way.

When we strive to carry on a program of youth activity that is Christ-centered and Bible-based, we are not doing "what comes naturally." True, such activity should be "natural" for a regenerate person, but who knows better than a group of Christian youth workers how the naturalness of the old Adam, leagued with the ever-present Devil and the ever-encroaching world, seem to obliterate the enthusiasm, sense of responsibility, and good intentions of even our Christian youth. Without an adult counselor to prod, gently and constantly, the natural inertia to things spiritual, so prevalent in young people, will quickly bring the work to a stumbling halt.

Simply because nothing Christian comes "naturally," we have a battle on our hands. Christian youth work is a battle to the finish because both

Christ and the Devil want the souls of these youth. That is why Christian youth work will never be easy. He who is looking for an easy way to do youth work is looking for something that does not exist, and that is why we need counselors, adults, mature Christians who will get into the fight and do battle that Christ and not Satan may have these young people for his own.

Christian youth work, like any Christian endeavor to win people for Christ, demands the warmth of Christian personality to ignite others with the fire of faith and the flames of love. These young people of ours need counselors if for no other reason than that they can get next to a person whom they respect, in whose life and on whose lips the grace of God in Christ is evident. Young people are extremely susceptible to the contagious personalities of adults, and that is why they need to know and to mingle and to work with adults who can infect youth with the Christian contagion.

The lack of vision has blinded too many in our church to the need for more workers in the Kingdom. When it comes to strengthening the full-time forces in any branch of endeavor, the question most seriously considered is, "Can we pay for it?" not, "Do we need it?"

We need staff so that youth work can be tied more closely to the church. It has been said that one of the weaknesses of the present church is that it has "atomized" its work, failing to consider the various activities and endeavors as parts of a homogenous whole. Too often the Sunday school, youth work, the men's program, and the women's activities go off in their own private directions with little thought for relationship and integration. Counselors in youth work should help to tie youth to the adult membership of the congregation. They should be in a position, also, to foster a sense of responsibility among youth both toward the individual congregation and also toward the activities of the larger church as a whole.

Every counselor should be acquainted with the purpose, organization, and projects of his church. The counselor should also know his place in the functioning of the youth organization, the planning and execution of programs, and the carrying out of projects. He should have an understanding of youth and their spiritual psychology. A counselor has no more profound and important task than to guide those entrusted to him into a conscious faith in Christ and a full assurance of salvation. Youth advisers should know how to deal with them spiritually and how, on the basis of the Word, to show them their sin, to convict them of indifference, to point them to Christ, to help them to assurance, to guide them in ascertaining God's will for their lives, and to outline the path of Christian conduct and growth.

The Lutheran Church must face the problem of providing a training

program for youth workers that will win the respect of lay adults. The latter are perturbed over the fact that there is no place to which they can go for adequately trained local youth personnel, whether clergy or lay persons. The specific assistance they want varies from analyzing a local youth program, to giving specialized help on critical youth problems, to helping a community solve its recreational problems. The word which one meets again and again is the word "trained." It is felt that youth leaders should be as well trained as those who are trained for a secular profession. This problem is critical, and the responsibility for initiating action rests ultimately with the church.

An adequate program of youth work would seem to exist where:

- a) A good deal is demanded in the way of sacrifice;
- b) Opportunities are offered in the way of Bible study conventions, and camps, as well as evangelistic activities;
- c) Youth clubs are being established as a medium of the church's service to youth;
- d) Work camp projects have been introduced, a technique which is recognized as an adaption of African traditional patterns of team service.

More emphasis is being laid on the inter-relation of agencies for Christian education, viz., the home, the church, and the school in one respect, and the Sunday school, uniformed organizations, boys' and girls' movements, YWCA, YMCA, etc., in another respect. The growth of these organizations is noted, and the value of seeing and comparing the syllabi and programs of each with those of the others is recommended.

Finally, prayer, patience, and perseverance are needed. Even though the actual enlisting and training of Lutheran youth leaders may appear to be the biggest hurdle in establishing a corps of youth workers, the ultimate goal is not thereby achieved. Many a program that has begun well has been shipwrecked on the rocky shore of no follow-through. The danger, and we may as well face it, is that the initial enthusiasm for engaging and briefing new youth workers can so quickly die down as the difficult task of keeping at a hard job becomes increasingly apparent. Let us not think, therefore, that we have arrived when we have enlisted and trained workers. It is hard to keep up the level of enthusiasm for youth work the second and third years one has engaged in it. Youth work will not succeed without prayer that provides divine power, patience that provides endurance, and perseverance that brings us finally to our destination, namely, the conserving and reclaiming of our youth for Christ.

*The Report of Section I on "The World We Serve" was received by the conference. After discussion and amendment, it was adopted as follows:*

## THE WORLD WE SERVE

God has called the church to serve the world. Therefore the church is not an end in itself. The foremost service which the church has to render to the world is the witness, in word and action, to the good news that God has sent his Son to save all mankind.

Because, by its very calling the church is bound to the world, the churches in Africa cannot remain aloof from contemporary events in their countries. With gratitude to God we rejoice with those among us whose countries have recently gained independence or are on the way to full autonomy. We unite in prayer that God, the Lord of history, may grant wisdom and justice to those who are called to lead the new nations.

In this decisive hour it is of special importance that the Lutheran churches throughout Africa should find fresh ways to render the distinctive service which is expected from them as churches. We therefore adopt the following resolutions:

### I. POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

- a) Christians are obedient in faith to their Lord. Therefore they are also called to practice this obedience in responsible citizenship. The churches should encourage their members to take an active part in government service and in political parties in order to "seek the peace of the city" (*Jer. 29:7*), provided they can do so without violating their primary obedience to their Lord.
- b) As Christians we confess the lordship of our Saviour over all the world. The churches therefore are in duty bound openly to denounce public evils such as injustice, discrimination, and corruption wherever they occur in their countries, even though this prophetic ministry may lead them into suffering.
- c) The church is *in* the world but not *of* the world (*John 17:16*). Therefore the followers of different political opinions as well as the members of different racial or ethnic groups should be included on equal terms in the congregations.

*d)* The special task of pastors and other full-time servants of the church requires that those among them who, after careful consideration before God, feel called to take up full-time political office should, for the duration of such office, withdraw from their position in the church.

## II. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

*a)* In view of the changing social scene in Africa in which such forces as industrialization, urbanization, and the rapid improvement of agricultural facilities are turning the everyday lives of millions of men, women, and children in new directions, the church should, by creating adequate committees on social responsibility, make themselves alert to the new opportunities of Christian service.

*b)* Such committees or other appropriate channels should be used when emergencies like floods and famines call for quick and effective relief to both Christians and non-Christians alike.

*c)* Educational and medical institutions which are operated by the churches should be examples of Christian service to the public. Renewed and strengthened welfare services are called for throughout Africa today. We would like to draw particular attention to agricultural development and the training in crafts and trades. Furthermore, the possibilities of Christian service in slum areas in the cities should be emphasized.

JESOSY KRISTY  
LALANA, FAHAMARINANA, FIAINANA

CHRIST  
YOUTH, THE LIFE



A boys' choir singing at an evening service.



Discussion group on Literacy and Literature Work. Left to right: Poul Schodt, Sigurd Aske, Rakoto Grandoel, Sheldon Torgerson, Wesley Sadler.

Prof. Razanajohary, one of the speakers at the conference, and Dr. Marthe Ramiaramanana-Ralivao, one of the few women delegates, both from Madagascar.





Four delegates from Ethiopia, specially dressed for their New Year's celebration.



Procession of delegates before the final rally.



The closing rally.



*The conference also adopted a resolution on race relations and discrimination. A similar statement had been adopted by the LWF Commission on World Mission which met from August 22-September 2 in Bukoba, Tanganyika. This statement was discussed in plenary and submitted to the Resolutions Committee for editing and was adopted as follows:*

## THE CHURCH AND DISCRIMINATION

WHEREAS today division and strife among men is such that the sin of discrimination against men on the basis of race, culture, nation, or tribe must be pointed out and spoken against;

WHEREAS the evil of discrimination divides men and, as such, is also an obstacle to the work of the Holy Spirit among men and the spread of the gospel of love;

WHEREAS the will of the Almighty God as revealed in his Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, in his Holy Word and by his Spirit of grace manifesting itself among men, calls upon all men to live as children of God in brotherly love and fellowship; and

WHEREAS Christians, who are one body in Christ, cannot claim always to have been free from forms of discrimination against men, and penitently in Christ confess their guilt:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference, meeting in Antsirabé, Madagascar, accept that we are under an obligation

- a) to remove from our midst all vestiges of discrimination against men on the basis of race, culture, nation, or tribe,
- b) to bear witness to the world and all men that all attitudes and practices of racial discrimination are sin and evil which cannot be countenanced by either our Creator or man himself and must be replaced by an attitude and practice of love and equality (*Gal. 3:28-29*) among men,
- c) to respect the freedom and individuality of all nations, peoples, and churches (that is, the right of all nations, peoples and churches to be free and to exercise the gifts with which God has endowed them),

*d) to request all Lutheran churches everywhere to pray and work for the effective application in our midst of the foregoing resolution by the help of Almighty God.*

This resolution is based on the insights provided in, among others, the following Bible passages: *Gal. 3:28, 29; Acts 17:26a; I Cor., chap. 12; Col. 3:11-15; Rom. 3:10, 23; Eph. 2:13-18; 4:30-32; I John 2:9-11; 4:20, 21; Matt. 7:12; 25:40; Mark 16:15; Rev. 7:9; I Tim. 2:1-3; James 2:1-9; Gen. 1:26; Lev. 19:18, 33.*

*SECTION II*  
*THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS*

## A UNIVERSAL FAITH

ARVID T. ALBREKTSON\*

By "a universal faith" we mean the Christian faith. We confess with St. Paul: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (*Eph. 4:5, 6*). And we accept as a promise and a challenge the pronouncement made by our Lord: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (*Matt. 24:14*).

The scope of our faith has quite often been narrowed to concern nothing but the relationship between God and the soul. In the Apostles' Creed, Jesus the Saviour stands quite literally and quite rightly in the center. In our daily Christian life the Third Article becomes a necessary supplement in the Second Article. But far too often the First Article is neglected.

When we speak of the Christian faith as a universal faith we usually take it to mean that it concerns everyone, that nobody should be excluded from its saving powers and that those powers are sufficient for any man at any time. The roads that lead away from the Heavenly Father, are many, but the way home is one and the same for any man, in any condition, at any time, because Jesus is the Way, and he is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

The Christian faith concerns more, however, than the relationship between God and the soul. This is where the First Article of the Creed comes in. "We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." Our belief in the Creator, who is also the Lord of history, ought to widen and deepen our faith. Long before man was able to send his little toy planets into space, long before the Copernican theory was accepted to give our globe a more humble place in God's creation, the biblical authors had revealed something of the immensity and the fate of the universe. St. Paul reminds the Colossians that the Son of God "is before all things, and by him all things consist. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible" (*Col. 1:16, 17*).

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\* Rt. Rev. Arvid T. Albrektson, Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia

When our minds are opened to the marvels and immensity of God's universe, pride is put to shame. Humbly we must ask: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (*Heb. 2:6*) Living under these conditions, totally left to the mercy of God, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded" (*Rom. 3:27*). And yet we have the audacity to be puffed up, one individual against another, one group against another.

While living on this earth we are torn between two powers. St. Paul calls them "the spirit of the world, the spirit which is of God." And he reminds the Christians that "we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God" (*I Cor. 2:12*). And St. John states with confidence: "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (*I John 5:4*).

Inasmuch as we receive, by faith, the Spirit which is of God we get a new driving force. The more fully we receive the Spirit of God the more freely the powers from above flow into our hearts and determine our way of thinking and our way of living. Lack of faith always means lack of power and, therefore, lack of victory. Increased faith means increased power and, therefore, new victories. At the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration, having tried in vain to cast out an evil spirit, the apostles asked with sorrow: "Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them: Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you" (*Matt. 17:19, 20*).

This fantastic promise was not restricted to the first disciples. It is a universal promise, attached to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This promise could, therefore, be fulfilled in us, as individuals, fighting the good fight of faith, and as responsible churchmen, fighting for the soul of Africa. How slow of heart we are to believe! A power-generating station, far exceeding the biggest in the world, is within reach of all of us. By faith we could, each of us, become transformers conducting the powers from above into the daily life of our surroundings.

This is not a time for despair. Listen to the voice of the Lord: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (*John 5:17*). It is the voice of him who cares more for Africa than does any man. With his apostles we would ask him: "Lord, increase our faith" (*Luke 17:5*). Because faith is the only lasting help for Africa and for the world. There are many problems to be tackled by politicians, by social planners, by church leaders. For their solution, intelligence, hard struggle, and endurance are needed. But more than anything else, faith is needed. Faith does not supply us with a computer that would automatically give us the right answer to each of our many questions. But it puts a compass into our hands that will help us, again and again, to find the right way.

## A FAITH FOR A SPECIFIC TIME AND PLACE

PAUL G. PAKENDORF\*

The basic fact from which all Christian thinking must take its departure is that the Word became flesh, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, that God became man in Jesus Christ.

Now God did not become just any man. He is not everyman. He became man in the man of Nazareth who was born when Augustus Caesar was reigning in Rome and Herod held sway as king in Jerusalem and who was crucified when Tiberius was emperor in Rome and Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea. This means that God became man and brother, friend and guide and saviour to man *in a particular place in the world and at a particular time in history* and that his dealings were with men and women of a particular nation with a specific culture and language.

He became part of this culture. He spoke the language of that people in a literal sense and in a metaphorical sense. God did not merely become man, any man, but he became a Jew of the first century A.D. and lived in Palestine and spoke Aramaic. He identified himself with his people and did not exempt himself from those religious and cultural patterns that obtained then.

His dealings were not with mankind in general, but with these people who were his contemporaries and his fellow countrymen. But here also we must note that he dealt with individual men and women in *particular* places. He met them in their everyday life, in their work, in their rejoicing, in their sorrowing, in their yearning for God, and in their sinning against the laws of God. He met them in concrete situations.

That Jesus Christ is not merely the man of Nazareth who lived nearly two thousand years ago, but a living reality today, is shown by the fact that he becomes the contemporary of every generation and

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\* Pastor Paul G. Pakendorf, Chairman, Council of Churches on Lutheran Foundation in Southern Africa, Superintendent, Evangelical Lutheran Church—Zulu-Xhosa-Swazi Region, South Africa

the compatriot of every countryman. He speaks the language of that particular people. As he spoke Aramaic to the Jews of the first century A.D., so to the Norwegian of today he speaks Norwegian and to the Russian Russian. As he walked the paths of Palestine and entered into towns, villages, and hamlets, so today he walks the highways of Sweden, France, Germany, and England and enters into cities and towns. To the Italian he is an Italian, to the German he is a German, to the Frenchman he is a Frenchman.

This does not imply a fragmentation so that you get various different Christs. But it is only in forgiving a particular, concrete sin that he overcomes sinfulness. It is only in being the brother of a particular man that he becomes a brother of all men. It is only in saving particular men that he becomes the Saviour of mankind.

From the above it follows that the response to the fact of the incarnation in love, adoration, worship, and service will differ according to country and age. Hymns and prayers, architecture and works of Christian art, including pictorial representations of the Lord, theology and abstract thought, including formulated confessions, by means of which we give expression to our apprehension of his reality in our midst—they all bear the imprint of a particular country and culture and of a particular age and generation.

Are we to say then that the different organized churches, as we know them, are a result of differences based on culture? Is the Lutheran Church a result of the Teutonic response, the Roman Church typically Latin, and the Anglican Church English? I hardly think so, although I will not deny that there is a measure of truth in this suggestion. Statistics show, for instance, that nearly half the people who speak German are Roman Catholics and that there are many Lutherans in countries where there are no people of Teutonic origin.

The division of Christendom into very many denominations depends upon the inter-action of very many factors, of which culture is only one. There is also this consideration that culture itself is determined to a very large extent by the kind of religion that is practiced in that particular nation. We cannot determine beforehand what the response to the fact of the incarnation will be, but one thing is certain, and that is that it will be diversified according to time and place.

We must come back to the question of fragmentation that was raised above. Diversification may lead to fragmentation and to distortion. The danger of this taking place is very real in certain parts of Africa, and I am thinking in this connection particularly of South Africa with its hundreds of "separatist" churches. If the response is to be recognizably Christian, certain criteria have to be met. The voice that is heard in the different languages must be that of the Good Shepherd. The God

who is worshiped in the many different ways must bear the features of the man of Nazareth. The thinking on these matters—the theology—must as far as possible endeavor to take the whole of Scripture into account. The formulated confessions, if there are any, must also go back to Holy Writ as the norm, and must be formulated in such a way that it becomes clear that the thinking of other Christian men and women has not been merely bypassed.

Bearing the above in mind, we turn our attention to this our continent and ask whether the man of Nazareth has become a contemporary of the man of Africa and whether he is apprehended as such. The possibility that because he was brought by foreigners, he has remained a foreigner must be faced. I must add that I am not at all happy about the expression "man of Africa" that I have used, as I am not at all certain that such a being exists. There are men and women of different tribes and nations and linguistic groups, but does such an abstraction as "the man of Africa" exist?

Christ was brought to Africa by men and women from Europe and America, every one of whom belonged to a particular age, to a particular country and culture, and to a particular confession. Anglicans, Lutherans, Methodists, Roman Catholics—they all brought Christ as they knew him and as they had been brought up to know and to worship him. They could not have done otherwise, and it would be foolishness to expect that they should have brought a Christ who is not the one whom they knew. The Christ who was brought here from Europe and America had certain common features, but there were also notable differences based on those facts that we have noted above, and which found expression in the different denominations. The forms of worship, the books of instruction (catechisms notably), the hymns, the thinking about God (theology) all bore the imprint of a specific age, a specific culture, and a specific confession. Let me repeat, it could not be otherwise.

There are those who say that this was a mistake which should have been avoided. If it could not have been avoided at the beginning, then there is all the more reason that that mistake which was unavoidable then, should be rectified now. The church in Africa should develop its own thought-forms, its own theology, its own confessions, its own forms of worship, its own hymns. The church in Africa should not be burdened with the ballast of European and American tradition. The church in Africa, as it today, bears the signs of foreign domination and is a foreign institution.

That sounds very fine, but is it true, and can these changes that are demanded be made to order as a tailor-made suit is? Can the church in Africa ignore the history of nearly two thousand years of Christian tradition?

tion and link up with the primitive church of Pentecost? To put this question is to answer it in the negative. Our experience in South Africa is that one of the reasons for the many sects in our country is this very ignoring of Christian thinking and Christian tradition in other countries. I would also ask whether it is right to deprive the people of Africa of the rich Christian tradition of other countries!

This does not mean that the church in Africa must be an exact replica of the church in, say, Sweden. But then the Lutheran Church in Sweden is not the exact replica of the Lutheran Church in, say, Bavaria. Just as both these churches are Lutheran in spite of differences, in the same way the church in Africa will be Lutheran in spite of differences.

I am thinking particularly of the outward appearance of the church, of those features which easily strike the outsider and the layman, such as forms of worship and vestments.

Before I deal with the suggestion that a peculiarly African confession of faith is a necessity, I would request that we, for a brief moment, consider the general situation in Africa. I am in this connection thinking in particular of things of the mind and of the spirit. By and large the peoples of Africa had no alphabet, nothing in writing, although oral traditions were many. Is it surprising then that nearly all the hymns we sing in Africa are translations, that there are no indigenous liturgical forms, that there is no indigenous theology and no indigenous confession of faith? Where attempts to produce these have been made they can only be classed as aberrations. I would ask, too, whether it is fair, things being as they are, to expect indigenous hymns, indigenous theology and indigenous confessions? When did these things emerge in central Europe and in the British Isles? Surely hundreds of years after conversion and Christianization. In Africa we still, in this respect, think in decades. The fact of the matter is that man in Africa is at a stage when he is assimilating the thought-forms and the theology of the West, but he has not yet shown signs of creative thinking in response to the Christian message.

The concept of a *Confessio Africana* is not African in origin. It can only have come from the incurably romantic thinking of white men. A confession for a whole continent? There will be confessions coming from Africa, but there will be many of them and they will not be the same. As the need arises, they will emerge to take their place next to the great Christian confessions which, by the way, are called by the names of towns and not of countries, let alone continents. Confessions are not manufactured and made to order. When the need arises for confessing your faith, stating what you believe and rejecting opposing opinions, then a confession emerges. No doubt, in God's good time, such a need will arise and such confessions will emerge.

Does all this mean that because there is no peculiarly African Chris-

tian art, Jesus of Nazareth is only seen through European eyes in Africa? Does it mean that he has remained a foreigner on African soil?

We have spoken of the liturgical forms and the ecclesiastical organizations and the theologies that the missionaries brought to Africa but have not mentioned the most important thing that they brought, namely the WORD. This word of the Bible was not merely brought to "Africa," it was brought to every tribe and to every nation and to every linguistic group, however small and insignificant it may have been. Here there was due regard for the fact that God in Christ Jesus meets us in our concrete, specific, everyday situations. Here the man of Nazareth has become the man of Africa. To the Mosotho he speaks Sesotho, to the Zulu Zulu, to the Movhenda Tshivhenda. Here he has become brother, guide, friend, and Saviour. He is not a foreigner, he is not part of the white man's religion. The hymns that we said were translated were in reality as often as not adapted and appeared in an African garment and in an African setting.

Listen to the prayers, not formulated prayers as they appear in our service books, but spontaneous prayers that come from African hearts. The language used is the home-language, that language in which the man of Nazareth speaks to them. It is not linguistic inability if a man from Africa suddenly in a great international gathering prays in his own language, the language of his fathers that has also become the language through which he in Jesus Christ approach the throne of God.

No, he is not a foreigner on the soil of Africa. In good time the response to his presence will come in an African idiom, and in an articulated form. He is a living reality as the contemporary and the compatriot of man in Africa today and speaks to him in his language as he spoke Aramaic to the Jews of the first century A.D.

## A UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP

HEINRICH MEYER\*

What does the faith of our fathers mean to us who live in a world which tends to become more and more different from the world of our fathers? The topic of this morning's lecture asserts that our fathers believed in a universal fellowship of all believers. This actually is but a little more cautious wording for the old statement of the Third Article of the Creed that they and we believe in the one, holy, universal, apostolic church, which comprises believers in all places and of all times. In other words, it asserts that we, believing like our fathers did, are thereby also taken into the universal fellowship of the one universal church.

Whenever we confess our faith in our services with the words of the Creed, we state in many languages and in different denominations that we believe in the one, holy, universal, apostolic church. These words have not changed from the days when our fathers uttered them in their services of worship. But in reality we have every reason to get startled and upset by this assertion. To an unbiased observer the universal fellowship of faith in the universal church seems to be the most unrealistic thing in the history of the church, as well as in our own days.

Since our fathers in the faith were Lutherans, we are Lutherans. If our father had happened to be a Methodist, we would in all likelihood be Methodist, if we followed him in his faith. The faith of our fathers certainly puts us in a fellowship, but that fellowship is anything but universal. It may be a fellowship which we love dearly and where we feel very much at home, but it is not universal. We may talk about the world-wide fellowship of the Lutheran Church, because there are Lutherans in almost every country on the globe, but it still remains a Lutheran Church, one denomination amongst many others. If at all, there is little and very limited fellowship between the various denominations which call themselves "churches." To put it bluntly: What we assert in faith is contradicted by what we behold with our eyes and what we practice as "churches."

Isn't this contradiction between our faith and our practice due to the

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\* Rt. Rev. Professor Dr. Heinrich Meyer, Chairman, LWF Commission on World Mission, Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lübeck, Germany

very fact that we cling to the faith of our fathers? We are grateful to them because their faith has kindled the flame of faith in our hearts.

But at the same time we must recognize soberly that their limitation in knowledge and expression of thought has limited us too and has led us into a fellowship which is limited to the Lutheran family and which is by no means universal. Doesn't the recognition of this fact inevitably compel us to become critical of our fathers and their limitations and to break away from their faith?

I could imagine, my dear African brethren, that this question is doubly poignant to you. You are at present involved in a very rapid and certainly justified process of gaining an independent position, independence not only from the white people whose race, culture, philosophy, and language is foreign to you anyway, but also from the old traditions and ways of life of your own fathers and forefathers. A new Africa is being born today. Nobody needs to be surprised if in such a situation you were to ask whether you should perpetuate the limitations imposed upon you by the faith of your fathers. The question is bound to be raised by you sooner or later, as it was raised by your brethren in the Church of South India and by many young people all over the earth. In other words: If we speak of faith and a universal fellowship, should not the emphasis be on our *own* faith and fellowship rather than on the faith of our fathers? The tragic consequence of such an attitude would, of course, be that in seeking and establishing a new universal fellowship of our own we lost the fellowship with our fathers.

One road of escape from this problem is the statement that the universal fellowship of the church is a *spiritual reality*, a matter of faith. That is, of course, true. The implication drawn from this statement is that the universality of our fellowship must be believed, but cannot be seen. This implication is wrong. For what we believe should also become real and manifest in our life and fellowship on earth. The Word of God became flesh in Christ Jesus, and he certainly wants to rule over our flesh, too, and make the limbs of our body weapons of righteousness. The spiritual nature of the church and the visibility of its oneness do not and must not exclude one another.

A second road of escape is marked by the statement that the body of Christ has many different members, like a tree has many branches. We certainly cannot deny this. But it is wrong if we continue: Thus the different denominations are all branches of the same tree, members of the same body. Together they are the one body of Christ. But the members of one body do not fight each other, nor can they proclaim different truths which contradict one another. The universality of the church is not restored by adding the denominations together because they are not just separated; they are divided by what each holds to be *the truth*.

There is a third road of escape: We know that all human insight and knowledge can comprehend but part of the truth and that we can give expression to that knowledge only in our own limited language and philosophy. Nothing could be more true. But the deduction made from this modest recognition of our own limited (i.e., that it does not matter in how many different ways we express the truth because *the* complete truth is beyond our comprehension anyhow) is wrong. The truth which we proclaim is the truth which saves the whole world and the fellowship of those who are saved is an eternal fellowship uniting all believers.

A possible fourth road of escape may just be mentioned in order to expose it as impossible, viz., that we believe our own denomination to be the only true church and all others to be false churches. Even the Roman Catholic Church, which in principle holds this position, is forced to admit that there may be members of the body of Christ, that universal fellowship, who are not Roman Catholics.

But how, then are we to escape the seemingly obvious and at the same time utterly destructive conclusion that we believe in a universal fellowship and that this universal fellowship does not exist?

A first answer is: We should realize in a deeper and different way the nature of the Christian faith. Faith is complete trust in what *God* is and what *God* does. Faith refuses to rely upon what we do and know.

From this first answer a second one can be deduced regarding God's church: the church exists, not because we believe in it and have joined it but because God has already created it. This church is by its very nature one and universal. He gave it one Lord and Saviour, his Son, Jesus Christ. He gave the one Word of the Holy Scripture. He gave one baptism, one Communion, one Spirit, one hope, and one way of salvation. The gift of the church is essentially the gift of grace.

He who believes can but believe in the one, holy, universal, apostolic church created by God. If he would believe in anything else, e.g., the Lutheran Church or the Presbyterian or Anglican Church, he would not believe at all. Our fathers were right when they made the Third Article of the Creed their own confession of faith. They did not give up their faith in the one, universal church because their faith in the grace of God compelled them to let God's gracious gift, this very one, universal church, stand as an unchangeable truth.

It remains to draw the conclusions from what we have discovered. What does this discovery mean to us in Africa today? I would like to list five conclusions, all originating in this central truth.

a) Lutherans in Africa should—with great humility and with deep gratitude—rejoice in the fact that their congregations and churches

are really visible manifestations of the one, universal church, because they believe in Jesus alone, in grace alone, and therefore also without reservation in the one, universal church, the creation and gift of God's grace alone.

- b) Lutherans in Africa need not leave the fellowship with their Lutheran fathers, because our fathers did not make us believe in the Lutheran Church or in Lutheran doctrine. They did not tie us to their own persons. They confessed Jesus alone, grace alone; they confessed the church as God's gift alone.
- c) Because our fathers invited us to look upon Jesus alone and to believe in him our faith cannot be a mere verbal repetition of what our fathers proclaimed. It must be a confession of the same faith in the same Jesus, the living Lord—but in our situation and in our language, to the people of our country and our time. The faith of our fathers does not relieve us from the confession of our own faith, but rather compels us to confess our own faith.
- d) Because we as Lutherans believe in the one universal church, we must be the most ecumenically minded denomination of all. Because we believe in the forgiveness of sins, we must believe that the sin of erroneous and false doctrine can be forgiven, too. As members of the one universal church we can never cease to stretch out our hands and thought in search of those who in other denominations believe in Jesus Christ. We must never become weary of talking with them about Jesus and his grace until we can have altar and pulpit fellowship with them because we have become one with them in the truth. We cannot forget the love of Jesus Christ for truth's sake, nor can we give up the truth for love's sake for Jesus is both, love and truth.
- e) Are we then on the road toward establishing one world-wide uniform Protestant church? I do not deny that I hope and pray for greater unification of Protestant churches in the different parts of Africa and all over the world. If we are serious in what we believe, viz., in the one universal church, then we cannot rest content with the present state of disunity among the churches. But that does not mean that we aim at a Protestant copy of the Roman Catholic Church. Because we believe in the one universal church, the body of Christ Jesus, we know that it is the broken body, the body broken for sinners.

Therefore we can but pray with the Spirit: "Come, Lord Jesus, amen. Come soon!" We are longing for the consummation and full revelation of what we believe with our fathers: The one universal fellowship of all believers in one, universal church.

## A CONFESSITIONAL CHURCH

RAKOTO ANDRIANARIJAONA\*

The confessional character of the church of Christ does not itself present a problem, for does not the church originate at the moment (*Matt. 16:16*) when the christological confession is first stated? It is here that Peter "accepts" or confesses the extraordinary and exceptional nature of Christ. He calls him "Son of the living God." And if the church expands and grows at Pentecost it is simply that other believers—newly convinced individuals—declare their adherence thereto.

The confessional nature of each Christian community, on the other hand, is a reality that disturbs those who are concerned for the reality of the *Oikoumene*. They see in this confessionalism one of the most embarrassing and insurmountable obstacles hindering the unity of the church.

It is necessary, in the first place, to confront confessionalism with the essential attributes of the church. And to approach this problem one must begin with the broad definition in our symbols. They speak of the church as being "the communion of saints" (those who are holy).

### THE CHURCH AS A COMMUNION

The term "communion" is not difficult to understand. It indicates that the believer is involved in a collective existence and that the grace of God apprehends also this collectivity. Thus is the grace of God complete. If this were not so, man—who is inescapably involved in collectivity—would not be helped in the wholeness of his life. The community constitutes a kind of rich and necessary reservoir of life experience. The "communion" is a means for the Christian nurture of the individual. It is thus that it is defined by the Reformers. It is a reality which is unfortunately subject to aberration. The "communion" then ceases to be a means of nurture, and becomes a quasi-deified entity to which the believer is subject. The Roman Church is an extreme form of this.

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\* Pastor Rakoto Andrianarijaona, Vice-President, Malagasy Lutheran Church, Madagascar

## THE CHURCH AS THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Anyone can see the community, but one cannot see the holiness. For Catholics, holiness is defined as rectitude in piety and Christian life. This would seem to be apparent and visible, but one is never sure that there is no hypocrisy involved. Ultimately, and in principle, there is no absolute certainty. Furthermore, the more we advance in Christian maturity the more our own imperfections become apparent.

Holiness is invisible; the new life is a thing inside a person. Love and everything that concerns it are by definition invisible.

Thus it is not possible to say that the church viewed in the light of holiness is a visible thing. It is impossible to make the church totally visible. And thus Melanchthon says, "Although the church is not of the Devil, there are those who are in the church and directing the affairs of the church who are not a part of it." In fact, the church as an institution is a mixture of the Kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of the Devil. It is impossible clearly to separate the two.

Given the visibility and invisibility of the church, what is the significance of confessionalism?

History shows that confessionalism has never succeeded except by the use of certain pressure. This was the case in the time of the Reformation. In order to establish a renewed visible church on the basis of a new confession evangelical in nature, it was necessary to call for the unity and loyalty of authorities, nobles, and electors.

## THE TRUE USE OF CONFESSIONALISM

Above all, we see the reason for confessionalism in the necessary vocation of the church, that is, the *kerygma*. To preach the Gospel it is not sufficient simply to read it. It must be interpreted. And this interpretation is necessarily qualified by the fact that human experiences, due to the inevitable human sociological and cultural differences among men, are not the same.

Faith, or rather the comprehension of the object of faith, is expressed by confession. Confessionalism is the cause of divisions. But it is at the same time a true effort to clarify and state the nature of the gospel, the common understanding of which is the condition for the unity of the church. Each Christian community must therefore take seriously its own confession, being always prepared to cede on these points which seem against the authentic expression of evangelical truth. Otherwise confessionalism is merely an instrument for the division of the church and Christ.

On the other hand, each church ought to have the courage to confront its confession with those of others and above all and always to study it in the light of the Scriptures.

*The Report of Section II on "The Faith of our Fathers" was received by the conference. After discussion and amendment, it was adopted as follows:*

## THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

Be it *resolved* that it is the opinion of this conference:

1. That the Lutheran Confessions as expressed in the Book of Concord are still valid and relevant and the best doctrinal foundation for the Lutheran Church.
2.
  - a) That even though the Confessions are valid and relevant for modern life they do not always give complete answers to questions that confront the church today.
  - b) That, for this reason, study should be made, in the light of the Word of God, by the churches on the various subjects with which the Confessions do not deal completely and that their findings be reported to the next All-Africa Lutheran Conference.
3. That, in order to effect these studies, the churches in each region or nation should elect two committees for intensive study of the following topics:
  - a) Liturgy, including hymns and music;
  - b) The relation of church and state (with specific attention to local conditions); baptism, the Holy Spirit, intercommunion, and the historic episcopate.
4. That representatives of the above-mentioned committees should meet and confer one week before the next All-Africa Lutheran Conference in order to issue their reports.
5. That these representatives forward specific proposals from their discussions to the plenary sessions of the conference.
6. That the Commission on Theology of the Lutheran World Federation be asked to provide consultative services to the proposed regional committees as they carry on the studies mentioned above.
7. That endeavors be made to come to Lutheran unity in a nation or region before effective participation in ecumenical negotiation on questions of faith and order is undertaken.

*The conference also adopted the following resolution:*

#### THE DOCTRINAL BASIS FOR CHURCH UNION

Since Lutheran churches of Africa will now or later be faced with the task of participating in negotiations for wider church union, the Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference draws the attention of the regional study committees to the necessity of considering and formulating what the Lutheran churches of Africa deem to be an essential doctrinal basis for church union.

*SECTION III*  
*THE MISSIONARY CHURCH*

## CHURCH DISCIPLINE

CHRISTIAN MTETWA\*

In speaking about church discipline we must first realize that different nations of the world have different codes of conduct. They all have some kind of rules and regulations by which they maintain discipline in their everyday life. It may be discipline in the home or in the society as a whole. In every nation or society discipline is exercised for the good of the people, for the maintenance and preservation of good conduct. It is exercised to check lawlessness and disorder.

Let me use the Africans as an example. The Africans have been brought up under strict discipline. So they grow up with that characteristic. Obedience is rigidly demanded. Do this or else you get punished.

Very often when we visited European and American homes we thought that the parents spoiled their children by keeping on speaking kindly to them even when they kept on doing wrong. This shows the various attitudes of the different people of the world.

Now one thing we should remember is that all these different nations need one thing in common, namely, the gospel, as they all are sinners. Where the gospel has been accepted there is a church. The members of this church are imperfect, erring human beings. Since the old nature is still working in the flesh, church discipline must be exercised.

There are many things that threaten to destroy the purity of the church. The Bride of Christ aims at walking in righteousness and holiness. To keep the church pure and holy these evils must be checked by means of church discipline.

The African character is such that it cannot tolerate breaking of the law. What is law is law, and the law must be kept. If a church member falls into sin he must be excommunicated. The church members look to the pastor and the congregational council to see how this person will be treated. They expect his excommunication because "he has broken the church law." They do not seem to look at it from the spiritual point of view, that he has fallen into sin which might suggest that this man

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\* Pastor Christian Mtetwa, Vice-President, Mankakanana Lutheran Synod, South Africa

needs the gospel. Moreover, it is true that most of the church members expect the pastor to act as a detective, going about to find fault with other church members of his flock. Very often pastors are blamed for things not known to them, and which have never been brought openly to their notice. This is lack of understanding of the purpose of church discipline on the part of the African churches.

Our young African churches in most cases have church council members who have little education, and do not read religious books to improve their spiritual knowledge. Therefore they do not grow very much spiritually. These are the men who deal with fallen brothers. There is always the danger of treating him like a prisoner before the court. I do not blame them very much. They do not understand. They need guidance. Sometimes we feel that the older churches, on the other hand, are too lenient when it comes to exercising church discipline. Maybe we judge them wrongly.

Polygamy, drunkenness, consulting witch doctors, adultery, false doctrine, fornication, idolatry, theft, neglecting to come to church services, are some of the common sins which beset the church.

Different ways have been practiced to apply church discipline, and different degrees of punishment have been used. In speaking about the degrees that have been used to apply church discipline we should first remember that the African churches have come from different missions, which have also come from different countries in which discipline has been practiced differently. As far as my synod is concerned, only the following measures have been applied:

1. Exclusion from the Lord's Supper for neglecting to come to church services until one repents and comes to church regularly again.
2. Excommunication for publicly living in sin, and persisting to do so in spite of admonition, thus setting a bad example before men. I would consider the penal seat as a thing of the past in most churches. At that time the excommunication was announced publicly before the congregation. Today the excommunication is announced during the confessional service, as well as the reinstatement.

Our churches in Africa should know first of all that the Office of the Keys was instituted by Christ, the Redeemer of mankind, for the purpose of salvation and not for destruction. In *I Cor. 5:5* Paul says, "You are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, *that his spirit may be saved* in the day of the Lord Jesus." When Christ gave his church the Office of the Keys he gave us the gospel. Its purpose is to extend the gospel to all sinners, whether of heathen or Christian background. It is good news to know that there is forgiveness even after

falling into sin. Since church discipline aims at correction and salvation of a fallen brother it must be treated in an evangelical way. He must be treated according to *Matt. 18:15-18*, with the view of winning him back to Christ. But this cannot be done unless the church, its pastors and laity understand the purpose of the Office of the Keys. A sinner is disciplined to bring him to repentance and salvation.

It is true that no congregation would tolerate open sin. In a very emphatic manner it should impress upon a person where his impenitence leads him, that as long as he remains impenitent, he cannot have forgiveness of sins, and shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. As members of the body of Christ, we must be concerned about the spiritual well-being of each other; each is his brother's keeper. We must show love to the erring brother and seek to restore him. *Galatians 6:1*: "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness."

It seems to me that this is the main thing our African churches are lacking—treating a brother in a spirit of meekness even after he has fallen. Jesus came to save sinners after they had fallen, but let us not forget that Christ emphatically condemned sin, but loved the sinner. "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost" (*Matt. 18:11*).

## THE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE YOUNG CHURCHES

PROFESSOR RAZANAJOHARY\*

All the churches which respond to the call of the same Lord have equal responsibilities. Jesus' last commandment to his disciples, immediately before his ascent into heaven, clarifies the mission of the churches: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (*Matt. 28:19*). This realization of the essential task of the Christian—that of making Christ known—is expressed in concrete action: the Christian goes about, seeking his neighbor and telling him the good news. That is the missionary task which originates in obedience to our Lord's command, "Go . . . and teach . . ." (*Matt. 28:19*).

It is therefore the duty of every church to preach the gospel and to carry on missionary work. Such work cannot be regarded as a luxury to be indulged in by churches with a surplus of staff which do not know how to use their spare money—if such churches exist. Quite the contrary. The fact shows that the churches are short of staff and of money. But in spite of this, they continue their missionary work.

The church regards missionary work as a vocation—the very reason for its existence. It is therefore logical to think that the intensity of the church's life may be measured by the way in which it carries on evangelism. If evangelism can be defined as preparing people so as to enable them to receive the Holy Spirit, and to experience its healing action, then the role of the church assumes tremendous (even terrifying) importance, because these human activities are thus raised to the level of the action of God. Realizing our weakness, we try to evade the task, imposed upon us by the Lord, arguing that God is all-powerful, and that he can save those whom he loves by means other than ourselves.

Nevertheless, we long for the love of the Father, and everyone who experiences his love feels the need to give in return. But what can we give? Is there a human response to God's love? It is because of faith

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\* Professor Razanajohary, Government Official, Services Académiques, Malagasy Lutheran Church, Madagascar

in God's love that we venture to assume responsibilities for the advance of his Kingdom.

Of these responsibilities, the financial one presents the most difficult problems for the young churches. Regarding it as something serious would be a sign of spiritual weakness and poverty. On the ground that saving souls take precedence over all else, and that faith despises obstacles, are not certain churches strongly criticized for not succeeding in providing for their own needs, and for refusing to participate in any work outside the parish?

No one can face his duty as a Christian and accept the implications of this duty, unless the gospel has full control of his life. If this is valid for everyone, it is the task of the church leaders to help the faithful to carry out their duty.

The necessity of helping, enlightening, guiding, forces us to take the church members as they are with all their human complexes, which deserve our solicitude. This means that the churches' financial problems must be regarded within a certain historic and geographical setting. In considering the countries of Africa and Madagascar, it will be helpful, therefore, to try to understand certain aspects of the question by examining it in its politico-economic background.

One fact cannot fail to strike our attention. Evangelism was preceded or followed by colonization, at any rate in the principal countries under review in this paper. The process of colonization is outside the scope of this study; we are interested in this social phenomenon only in so far as it affects the life of the churches. One theory attempts to prove that the dependence complex (for instance, among the Malagasy people) is inherent in them, and is explained by the psychology of the people of Madagascar. As if the Malagasy were born incapable of directing their own lives, and with no means of perfecting themselves, and no desire to struggle for survival! Any such idea is now out-of-date, and no such allegation can stand up to analysis. For everyone, without exception, is born with the very natural need to depend on others; but education may be directed so as to liberate the individual.

In this connection there has been a lamentable decline in the sense of responsibility. For decades the population have not been allowed to take any responsibility. And the life of the churches reflected this sort of apathy characteristic of nonresponsible people. The lack of initiative comes as a corollary to make the situation completely deplorable. Should one object to this statement and reply that the churches have never failed to meet their obligations? Are not the religious services always full? Are not the Sacraments regularly celebrated? Do not the church buildings stand with their spires pointing inflexibly to heaven, witnessing to the presence of the faithful, if not to their vigi-

lance? Are there not constant movements for revival to arouse those who slip into apathy?

All that is true. Nevertheless, while recognizing that the Christians in the colonized countries have struggled to maintain their religious life, one is forced to admit that the situation as a whole might have been better if the idea of individual responsibility had not been undermined.

With regard to the money collected by the churches, are we not justified in asking what means the population have at their disposal? For if the economic position of the country is not sound, not every family can contribute effectively to church expenses. What about a country where there is an unfavorable balance of trade every year? Of course, Christians give more than a tithe, especially in the case of special projects not included in the budget. But the tithe becomes ridiculously small when it is based on an income lower than the minimum subsistence level—which is the case for many of our church members.

We have no desire to turn politico-economic events into essential determining factors in the work of the churches, even as far as money is concerned; but we warmly welcome the dawn of a new regime in the countries of Africa and in Madagascar, in the conviction that the future is now full of promise for our church members who are now citizens of free countries. Once the heavy mortgages of political subjection are removed, we hope that the enthusiasm aroused through attaining independent status will have its repercussions in the life of the churches, and that every member will think out afresh his position as a Christian and take a strong resolution to keep pressing forward for the glory of God.

A new era requires new methods of work. In this respect much may be learned from the economists, who work out a plan for the maximum development of the country in order to improve the general standard of living. Would it be out of place to regard the activities of the churches as requiring deliberate planning, and hence needing to mobilize all the energies of its members? Our Lord's commandment to "teach all nations" is merely the outline of a vast program; and we are in danger of getting bewildered, or of acting without proper planning. As faithful servants we will seek the best way of carrying out the program with which we have been entrusted. The task of each young church seems still to be confined to its own particular country; every national church is trying to complete the evangelism of its own people. But we hope that this temporary limitation will not restrict the scope of the work, which is immense and where some form of planning should not be despised. At present our churches are living at a subsistence level without yet conceiving the possibility of develop-

ment; or if they do so, their resources are inadequate. But growth is a sign of life; any church which stops growing will die. The gifts of its members lose their value if they are not sufficiently high to enable the church to expand.

Descending to the practical level, we will consider some of the tasks which ought to be undertaken, so that we can use the funds at our disposal in the best way.

1. The church leaders should be able to make a systematic study of the financial responsibility of Christians, stressing the use of money in the churches. A pamphlet could be brought out, or, if this is too small, a book summarizing the studies on different problems, including financial responsibility. It is particularly important to inform young households about these questions. At the moment when young people start their adult life it is essential that they should consider the financial problem of the church. A book of this kind could be presented to young couples at weddings, together with the Bible or the hymnbook.
2. Confirmation candidates are often too young to understand how the financial question affects the churches. But those responsible for them should reserve at least one session in order to describe the different ways in which money is spent by the churches. This will give them some idea of the organization of the national church, at all levels, and will show them how the local congregation participates in financing the work undertaken by a regional synod or the general synod.
3. From the legal point of view every religious community is an *association*, the purpose of which is worship. And any association consists of members who pay regular contributions, otherwise their names are struck off the list. Would it not be a good idea to propose a minimum contribution which, without being compulsory, would certainly be paid by all regular members? Because of its compulsory nature, many people object to the system of paying contributions to the church. It should be made clear that it is *not* compulsory; it is rather a suggestion to communicants as a token of their church membership. Of course, these contributions will not be a pretext for doing away with collections and voluntary donations.
4. Any congregation, or group within a congregation, can acquire property (such as land) and use it for the benefit of the work of the congregation. The income from an enterprise of this kind will make an appreciable addition to the budget. The rural centers are in a favored position for this; the urban centers should be able to find some similar project. In any case, the congregation must acquire

the status of a legal person; and provision can be made for this in the general statutes of the churches.

The circumstances of our time force all Christians to re-examine their lives and their attitude toward the church. People who believe that Jesus Christ came to save men cannot shirk the responsibility of playing their part in sharing the tasks of the churches, and can only deplore failure to administer the finances of the churches, which ultimately means failure in evangelism. People who believe that they have received redemption through the grace of God will regard collections and material sacrifices as opportunities of showing their gratitude for the love of the Father. And if we consider the fact that through grace our efforts are part of God's plan to redeem our neighbor, we shall realize the urgent need to give generously and ungrudgingly in gratitude.

## THE CHURCH IN HER OUTREACH

FREDRIK A. SCHIOTZ\*

Our topic is to be seen in light of the theme "The Missionary Church." This is to say, that the church's outreach must never be seen as a program of organizational skills and techniques. The outreach must grow out of the very nature of the church.

The messianic community promised by the prophets is fulfilled in the New Testament church. In the church the concern for *all* people which glimmers across the pages of the Old Testament breaks out in the full-orbed light of the New Testament. To be sure, Jesus' teaching and healing was pretty well confined to the Jews. Except for the Samaritan woman at the well of Sychar, the Gentiles who received his attention got it only by seeking him out. But his concern for the Gentiles was never in doubt. Nicodemus was reminded that "God so loved the *world* . . . that *whosoever* believeth in him should . . . have everlasting life" (*John 3:16*). As Jesus looked to the end of history, he taught "that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (*Matt. 8:11*). Observe further the reference to the Ninevites, the Queen of Sheba, Tyre and Sidon, and the Land of Sodom (*Matt. 11:20-24; 12:41, 42*). The Great Judgment scene in Matthew 25 pictures "all nations" as gathered before his throne.

As Jesus approached his Passion, the full scope of God's concern for the Gentiles unfolds. All the Gospels show that the mission to the Gentiles follows after the death and Resurrection of the Messiah. In the last chapter of each of the four Gospels, the object of concern is *all* people. Jesus made this unmistakably clear in his instruction of Cleopas and his friend: "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among *all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem" (*Luke 24:45-47*).

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\* Dr. Fredrik A. Schiotz, Vice-Chairman, LWF Commission on World Mission, President, The American Lutheran Church, U.S.A.

The initial response of the disciples to this broad outreach to all people was hesitant and faltering. But it was definitely there from the Day of Pentecost. In his sermon on that day Peter declares: "To you is the promise and to your children," and then adds, "And to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him" (*Acts 2:39*). Whatever hesitation there may have been on Peter's part to accept the full significance of his own words was washed out in the vision granted him on the housetop of Simon the tanner in Joppa (*Acts 10:9-48*).

Paul never doubted that the mission of the Ecclesia was to *all* people. While he retained the idea that some "advantage" accrued to the Jew (*Rom. 3:1*) and that salvation was for "the Jew first" (*Rom. 1:16*), he would tolerate no limitations on who might participate in the church of God. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (*Gal. 3:28*).

Perhaps the simplest statement of mission, applicable to all times, is Jesus' word to the disciples: "As my Father has sent me, even so send I you" (*John 20:21*).

If anyone has any doubt about the specifics involved in the Father's sending of the Son and therefore also about the specifics of the church's outreach, let him carefully weigh Jesus' Nazareth announcement: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor; He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (*Luke 4:18, 19*).

### THE CHURCH'S OUTREACH

1. The presence of the Spirit and the commission *to preach good news to the poor* are two sides of the same reality. Where the Spirit is, there is both proclamation and granting of forgiveness. And where forgiveness is demonstrated and proclaimed there dwells the Holy Spirit. The church that forgets to place the proclamation of God's forgiveness in Christ at the center of its outreach betrays the Spirit.

This obligation of the Church to *witness* must not be understood as the sole responsibility of the ordained ministry. Section II at the Hanover Assembly spoke significantly on this matter:

The representatives of the younger churches especially, gave convincing factual reports on the participation of laity in mission work of autonomous younger churches. . . . The narrow interpretation of the ministerial office must, in principle, be *abandoned*. The entire congregation, which of its own accord regulates the various ministerial offices and services, and accepts all those into service that are prepared for it through the Holy Spirit, is responsible for the ministry.

This multiplication of witness through many believers keeps it fresh and rich. For are there not as many kinds of spiritual poverty as there are people? And does not each believer's experience add to one's understanding of the depth of God's grace? Was it not this awareness which led St. Paul to exclaim, "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God?"

2. The church is responsible to *proclaim release to the captives*. In accepting this commission from her Lord it is clear that he was not speaking of the four walls that make a prison. Men become captives through their own egocentricity, through their failure to react to life's experiences with trust in their Heavenly Father.

To proclaim release to prisoners is to declare the grace of God with the Spirit's wisdom and understanding. This begins with didache, teaching the truth. How then can the church do other than reach out through a continuous teaching ministry?

A teaching ministry that liberates those who are bound from within will take note of the inner workings of the human heart. "God regards men not as they are merely, but as they shall be" (George Macdonald). It was this understanding type of teaching that Jesus employed in his first meeting with Simon. To the bungling awkward Simon, full of inner disgust with himself, Jesus set the prison door ajar by pointing to what he would become: "You shall be called Rock" (John 1:42).

A teaching ministry that liberates those who are bound from within will employ more than word of mouth. The truth must find expression in deed, clothed in a living person.

This outreach through deed was beautifully demonstrated through an Indian pastor who recently returned to his people after several years of study in the United States. Among his people scarcely anyone can afford shoes. The first Sunday he was at home he laid aside his Western shoes and walked five miles to church. The tender soles of his feet became raw and bled. But through this act he gained an acceptance among his people that gave impressive power to his teaching ministry.

3. The Church is responsible to *set at liberty those who are oppressed*. How shall we distinguish between "captives" and the "oppressed"? May we for our purposes equate the oppressed as the group even as we regarded the "*captive*" as the individual?

Let us be very specific. The political freedom that has come and is still in process of coming to the nations of Africa must surely be of God. But depending upon how the people react to it, it may be God's blessing to them or it may become that which robs them of their liberty and imposes a new type of oppression. What a significant opportunity

for the church to reach out with the evangel of Christ through a demonstration of responsible use of freedom. Was it not this hope which His Excellency E. Abraham gave expression to in his address at Marangu five years ago when he said:

We expect myriads of Africans to turn to the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ and find the fullest freedom which only faith in His Name can give. We expect this spiritual freedom in Christ for Africa to be followed by relatively lesser but nonetheless essential freedoms to enable individuals and nations to live with dignity as human beings and at peace with their fellowmen . . .

Fellow Christians, from whichever part of Africa you may be coming, be of good cheer, for your salvation in the fullest sense draweth nigh.

There are forces, however, that work against this hope. James Robinson, Negro pastor of the Church of the Master in Harlem, New York, declared after returning from a visit in Africa, "Few Africans ever tell Europeans what they are really thinking." Conversely, the West has not learned to listen to African ideas and ways of acting. May we in our discussion period face up to the degree in which we are demonstrating the maturity and the responsible use of freedom which God wishes in the Lutheran churches of Africa.

As a stimulus to such discussion, may I propose consideration of several specific objectives:

- a) That all African Lutheran churches not now members of the Lutheran World Federation seek to qualify for membership by the time of the Helsinki Assembly in 1963.
- b) That consideration be given to the desirability of helping each member church to be represented in the annual meetings of the Commission on World Mission.
- c) That a committee be appointed to draft a master statement that might be used in formulating agreements between African churches and churches or societies of the West that supply help in personnel and finances.
- d) Lest the movements of nationalism induce church union on a largely organizational basis, that a committee be appointed to formulate a contemporary statement on the doctrinal essentials for church union.

4. The Church is responsible to proclaim *recovering of sight to the blind*. May we define this outreach of the church as its *diakonia*, its concern for the physical welfare of people? In the August 1 issue of *Christianity Today* Sherwood Wirt warns against "downgrading 'mission' either as interchurch-aid or as just about everything a church does through its total program." This warning is in order if concern for welfare pre-empts the priority of the good news of the gospel. But the

concern for physical welfare may very well be an eloquent testimony to the gospel.

A careful reading of St. Luke reveals Jesus' passionate concern for all needs of men. He was busy going about doing good, being a neighbor to his neighbor. St. John called upon the believer to follow in the footsteps of his Lord when he asked, "But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" (*I John 3:17*).

The answer to this question may have to be given in an extraordinary context. Pastor James Robinson has pointed out that "political, labor, socio-economic and cultural forces have moved far beyond the religious and mission forces in their awareness of and adjustment" to Africa's crucial needs. Let not the church lose its outreach to these movements by a lackluster concern for the physical welfare of people.

We have not been given permission to choose our neighbor. God chooses him for us in the person with whom we are confronted in the daily routine of life. To be a neighbor to the neighbor God has chosen for us is the yoke and the burden imposed on the followers of Christ. But never forget that he has promised that in experience we shall find the yoke to be easy and the burden to be light.

*The Report of Section III on "The Missionary Church" was received by the conference. After discussion and amendment, it was adopted as follows:*

## THE MISSIONARY CHURCH

The All-Africa Lutheran Conference wishes to express thanks to God for the continued and growing mission activity of the churches, congregations and individuals in Africa as well as other parts of the world.

In our day of changing conditions in which many forces for good and for evil seek to influence the people among whom our churches serve we urge that redoubled effort be made to proclaim the gospel to all people. Our prayers must be that every Christian so receive the love of Christ that he, through his life and work, becomes an effective witness. While we realize that all missionary work in the deepest sense of the word is the work of the Holy Spirit, we are convinced that the church of Christ should express its true nature as an instrument of God to bring all men into his Kingdom:

1. By strengthening the mission program of each church body to reach all people within its sphere and to reach out to all unevangelized areas.
2. By utilizing the congregations as missionary forces in the community, through a strong inner sense of unity and love that draws people to its fellowship, and as a body of believers living to witness of Christ.
3. By urging every Christian to realize his power to lead families, friends, and neighbor to Christ through a full discipleship.
4. By wide use of audio-visual equipment to reach the multitudes for Christ.
5. By ever seeking new methods of evangelism that may be effective in building his church.
6. By stimulating youth work in order to keep our young people for Christ and to encourage them to lead active Christian lives.
7. By urging institutions for the training of pastors, evangelists and parish workers to conduct courses in missions.
8. By encouraging adult literacy programs as a medium of evangelism.
9. By seeking to co-ordinate the activities of the missions and churches in a strong co-operative program of extensive evangelism.

IT IS REQUESTED:

1. That methods of evangelism found effective in certain areas be shared with other churches through the office of DWM so each church can benefit from the experiences of others.
2. That publication of tracts and charts useful in evangelism be increased.
3. That every church work out a program of systematic follow-up of radio contacts as soon as the radio program is initiated so that individuals hearing of Christ may rapidly be drawn into the Christian fellowship.

Section III on "The Missionary Church" also submitted a statement on "Church Discipline" which was adopted by the conference:

## CHURCH DISCIPLINE

It is recognized that the Word of God, which is sharper than a two-edged sword, is the normal spiritual instrument for discipline for the Christian and is exercised each time the Word is proclaimed and read.

This discipline is constantly at work in the congregation, which is to be a corporate witness of Jesus Christ. The purity of the congregation should be constantly maintained by a diligent use of the Word of God and the Sacrament of the Altar, and in the preachers' mutual encouragement of each other in spiritual fellowship. (*Heb. 10:23-25; Eph. 5:15-20; Col. 3:16, 17; Phil. 1:27.*)

If an individual falls into sin and is under conviction, there should be opportunity for him to confess his sin privately and receive assurance of forgiveness and aid in overcoming temptation. If his sin is known to members of the congregation, they should admonish him in love so that he may repent and be retained in the fellowship of the congregation (*I Pet. 5:19, 20; Col. 3:12-14; Gal. 6:1, 2*).

If he persists in his sin, discipline should be exercised by the church in denying him certain privileges of the church in order to convict him of the error of his ways and of the wound caused in the corporate body of Christ on earth (*Matt. 18:15-17; II Cor. 2:5-7*).

If he does not repent, but continues in open sin that brings a blot upon the congregation and weakens its witness to Christ, it will be necessary to suspend him from church membership, always seeking his repentance and return to Christ under continued prayer and admonition, that he may once more be reinstated into the full membership of believers (*I Cor. 5; II Thess. 3:14, 15*).

It is recognized that church discipline may vary with individual situations and conditions and change with the development of the church. This problem should, therefore, be open to frequent review in order that such discipline may at all times be of spiritual value to the church and a blessing to its members.

It is regretted that the laxity of discipline in some churches that should be examples to others has weakened the understanding of the true spirit of discipline and its effective practice.

*The following resolutions were also adopted by the conference:*

## THE SELF-GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCHES

The second All-Africa Lutheran Conference gives thanks to Almighty God so that many countries and churches of Africa have become independent since the first All-Africa Lutheran Conference five years ago and asks the Lord's blessing and guidance upon all who now bear the responsibilities of freedom and self-government. Because politically free and independent peoples should also have self-governing churches, we call upon all African Lutheran churches not now members of the Lutheran World Federation to seek to qualify for membership by the time of the Helsinki Assembly in 1963.

## THE RELATION OF AFRICAN CHURCHES TO MISSION BOARDS AND SOCIETIES

The second All-Africa Lutheran Conference requests the Department of World Mission of the Lutheran World Federation to draft a master statement that might be used in formulating agreements for co-operation and help between African churches and churches or societies of the West that supply help in personnel and finances.

## *DISCUSSION GROUP REPORTS*

## LITERACY AND LITERATURE\*

*The Discussion Group on Literacy and Literature Work reported:*

1. That there are millions of adults in Africa who cannot read and who, unless helped by the church, will remain illiterate, never experiencing the power and joy that comes from reading the Word of God for themselves;
2. That though there are many Christian books available in Africa, not enough of them are interesting or readable, and too many of them are foreign to Africa, not answering its questions or meeting its needs;
3. That there are not enough foreign writers for Africa who are sufficiently informed concerning Africa's languages and cultures and competently aware of Africa's desires and needs.

*The Conference therefore recommended:*

1. That the church in Africa provide, as an integral part of its program, adequate facilities to enable its illiterate adults to cross over to the challenging and stimulating world of literacy;
2. That the church secure more African writers trained in Africa to provide adequate literature for Africans, literature that will strengthen their Christian faith, increase their knowledge of the Scriptures, broaden their education and stimulate, amuse, and challenge them.

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\* Leader: Wesley Sadler  
Secretary: Rakoto Grandoël

## MEDICAL AND WELFARE WORK\*

*The report of the Discussion Group on Medical and Welfare Work was amended and adopted as follows:*

1. We feel our churches cannot dispense with medical work as it is an expression of Christian mercy. Up to now all institutions have been run and subsidized by the missions. As we are now trying to form indigenous churches with African leadership these churches ought to take also more responsibility for medical and welfare work. We suggest that the churches should spend a certain percentage (e.g., 5-10 per cent) of their total income for this work.
2. We further suggest that the churches should make better use of the possibility of evangelization in the hospitals by providing capable pastors and evangelists. The congregations should also organize regular visits of the sick in hospitals as well as at their homes. Non-Christian patients who are affected by the Word of God in the hospital should be followed up by the congregation concerned after their discharge from the hospital.
3. We suggest that the possibilities of further training overseas for able medical assistants and nurses be explored and that scholarships be granted if such possibilities are offered.
4. We suggest that some students who have obtained necessary standards should be given grants for studying medicine and also that assistance for advanced study be given to African doctors now practicing.
5. We emphasize again the need of more medical missionaries from overseas for the present time.
6. In light of the growing need for Christian physicians in Africa, we refer to the All-Africa Church Conference the need for the establishment of a Christian Medical College for Africa.

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\* Leader: Sebastian Gervas  
Consultant: Gotthard M. Schmiedel  
Secretary: McDonald September

## YOUTH WORK\*

*The report of the Discussion Group on Youth Work was received, amended, and adopted as follows:*

Not only in the group discussions, but in the sessions of the conference as a whole, there was sensed a spirit of urgency concerning the youth of Africa, as time and time again people have referred to the problems facing youth today. The following recommendations of this conference are offered with the spirit of people who ring alarm bells to warn of danger.

1. A youth worker cannot work successfully unless the leaders and pastors of the congregation support his work. We urge every church to keep emphasizing to its pastors their responsibility to the youth program.
2. The Lutheran World Federation is requested to study the possibility of establishing an all-Africa "Lutheran Youth Research" project, to survey youth problems and needs in order to guide the youth work of the churches, that it may speak relevantly to the young people of today.
3. The Lutheran churches of Africa are urged to conduct regional conferences on youth work to study the immediate and urgent needs facing our ministry to young people. These conferences should utilize the thinking and experience of all Christian churches.
4. The Lutheran churches of Africa are urged to make careful recruitment of youth leaders and the LWF Department of World Mission is requested to assist in the study and development of any possible avenues of training these workers.
5. The Lutheran churches are most seriously asked to provide funds for the youth work especially in the big cities for the establishment of Christian youth centers and for an effective ministry to students in higher educational institutions and to the rising intellectual class.

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\* Leader: Carl Beyerholm  
Consultant: Gurli Vibe-Jensen  
Secretary: Masoba Moyo

6. That each regional federation or group of churches establish means for the exchange of ideas and information in the field of youth work.
7. That the attention of the churches is directed toward the programs and facilities for the training of youth which exist in international movements such as the Boys' Brigade, Boy Scouts, and Girl Guides so that the best possible use is made of these movements in the churches' ministry to youth.

## THE USE AND STUDY OF THE BIBLE\*

*The report of the Discussion Group on the Use and Study of the Bible was received, amended, and adopted as follows:*

### 1. *The limitations and hindrances to the use of the Bible in our churches.*

We are grateful that the complete Bible has been published in so many different languages, but realize that in many areas only single Gospels or only the New Testament are available and that this is a limiting factor in the development of the churches concerned.

It is therefore recommended that, where complete Scriptures do not exist, local churches should take every step possible to set on foot and encourage organized translation work.

It is further recommended:

- a) That there should be regular surveys of the Scriptures we possess, to ascertain whether they are really in the living language of the people and whether there is need for revision.
- b) That some of the best men in our churches be set aside for Bible translation and revision and that they be given adequate training.
- c) That in order that the Bible may be available to our people in attractive editions, the churches should review regularly the format, lay-out, and bindings of our versions and make recommendations to the Bible societies. We should ensure that there are regular and adequate supplies of the Scriptures available to all our people, and to this end we should review periodically the price of the Scriptures and encourage distribution by every means possible.
- d) One of the greatest hindrances to the spread of the word of God in printed form is the high proportion of illiteracy in all areas. We recommend that:

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\* Leader: Francis Bedford  
Consultants: Ezra Jangare  
Rajaonarivelo Rainizafinandro  
Secretary: Gerald Currens

The church either initiate, or wholeheartedly support, literacy campaigns wherever necessary, and that special organizers be set aside for this work; and that a more intensive use should be made of visual aids in passing on the content of the Bible to illiterates. We feel that supplies of Bible pictures—both still and to be projected—should be made readily available to pastors, evangelists, teachers, etc.

2. *The use of the Bible in the personal devotions of a Christian*

- a) We would emphasize to the whole church the need to encourage the use of the Bible regularly in personal devotions.
- b) Although Bible reading schemes do exist in many areas, these are sometimes not entirely satisfactory; in some areas such schemes are not in operation. Therefore we recommend that every effort should be made to supply this lack and also to give adequate instruction in the schemes where they exist. There might be some pooling of resources in this matter.
- c) It is most important that assistance should be given to those who read the Bible for the first time. This might be done by the provision of informative pamphlets to be inserted in all Scriptures sold. These should give a short introduction to Bible reading and some simple direction as to means of approach.
- d) While we recognize that some areas represented in this conference have available commentaries and concordances in the vernacular, there are others that are very inadequately served with Bible helps. There is a great lack of vernacular literature which explains in a simple manner the great teachings of the Bible.
- e) In view of the proven popularity and value of Bible correspondence courses, we recommend the use of such courses as an important method of Bible study, and would urge the organization of such courses in local church areas.

3. *The use of the Bible in the home and public worship*

- a) We would emphasize the use of the Bible in family worship and prayer in the home as essential to the health and well-being of Christian home life. There is no more potent factor in increasing knowledge of the Scriptures among our young people.
- b) We feel that it is imperative that we encourage our pastors to produce devotional material for use in the home and that this should not only be by translation of existing material published for use in the Western church.
- c) We feel that the careful, well-articulated reading of the Bible in public worship is one effective method to the developing of knowl-

edge of the Bible among our people. There should be a definite attempt by theological colleges and Bible schools to train students in the clear reading of the Bible in public worship.

*d)* We recommend that there should be held annually special Bible weeks when every method possible, the importance of the study of the Bible and its distribution, should be brought clearly before our people.

*4. The use and study of the Bible by young people*

*a)* We feel that there is need to consider very closely the methods we can use within our youth organizations to train our young people in enthusiasm for and love of reading the Bible. This should form an integral part of all youth organization programs, making use of such methods as Bible-reading contests, Bible exhibitions, Scripture emphasis weeks, etc.

*b)* It was felt that teachers, not only in church schools but also in government schools, should as far as possible be given assistance in the best use of the Bible in opening devotions. Bible reading on such occasions is often haphazard and ill directed.

*5. The pastor's personal use of the Bible*

*a)* It recommended that everything should be done in our churches to ensure that the pastor is trained in regular and systematic Bible study. This is often made difficult because the pastor is unable to build up an adequate library of Bible helps. It is therefore recommended that where possible lending libraries of up-to-date publications be available.

*b)* It is recommended to those responsible for theological training that pastors be trained in using the Bible in pastoral visitation.

*6. The use of the Bible in evangelism*

*a)* It is felt that we should bring before our churches the need for more effective use of the Bible as a tool for evangelism to reach the great masses outside the Church.

*b)* We commend to all our churches the use of the "single gospel" as "the effective cutting edge of evangelism." In connection with this, we would bring to the notice of all churches represented in this conference the Million Gospel Campaign organized by the British and Foreign Bible Society. It is felt that this campaign should not only be the mere distribution of gospel portions, but their use in evangelistic campaigns of many and varied types. (Information about this campaign can be obtained from the local representative of the Bible Society or from the Bible House, London.)

### *7. The use of the Bible as a source of Christian teaching*

Our essential use of the Bible for the Church, especially in a time when conflicting non-Christian teaching is imposing itself upon churches everywhere, is to base all our teaching upon the apostolic witness as found in Holy Scriptures, so as to preserve the Christian doctrines in conformity with the revelation of God through the changing time. Correct biblical teaching is essential for the life of the church and the extension of the Kingdom of God.

### *8. Questions for Study*

It is felt that some investigation is necessary on certain important questions:

- a)* Are there points where the Bible and its message may be in danger of misuse in the African Church, e.g., the use of the Bible as a "magical symbol"; or the use of the Old Testament without the New Testament, leading to the setting up of separatist groups based upon Old Testament theology and custom, etc.?
- b)* It has been said that the African appreciates and understands certain aspects of Old Testament life better than the European. Is this true and what is its significance for the use of the Bible in the church in Africa?

## STEWARSHIP AND THE LAY CHRISTIAN\*

*The Discussion Group on Stewardship and the Lay Christian submitted the following report, which was accepted by the conference:*

### I. INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION

The discussion group having viewed the topic both from its scriptural basis and experience in our churches, agreed that the following definition and description of Christian stewardship be recommended to the conference:

Christian stewardship is the response of the Christian to God's love and purpose, the recognition that he is appointed by God to use his life responsibly, productively and thankfully. This is his stewardship because Christ died for him. It is possible because Christ has arisen.

God clearly intends that the Christian shall develop and use his capacities, his abilities, and his precious years. Placed in a material world, he is to share in managing and using it so as to serve God and the human family for which it was created.

All the best fruits of the centuries have been entrusted to the Christian, as a member of this family, including worthy institutions of religion, government, education, and scientific research. He is called to use this material, moral, and spiritual inheritance for the enrichment of his own generation and of the generations that are not yet born.

Above all, the Christian is a steward of the gospel—the sacred revelation of the will of God for man through Jesus Christ. He is called to devote regularly generous portions of his time, money, and all other available resources for the present and future proclamation of this

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\* Leader: Ruben Pedersen  
Consultant: Prof. Razanajohary  
Secretary: Adolphe D. Jephta

gospel and to join eagerly with others in carrying out this supreme mission.

## II. WEAKNESSES AND DIFFICULTIES IN OUR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

### A. *On the part of the pastor*

1. Some pastors give too little time to the study and teaching of the Word, this often being limited to the Sunday sermon only.
2. Some pastors hesitate to assume the responsibilities of congregational leadership, particularly when under another's supervision.
3. Some pastors fail to recognize that their responsibility is above all before God.
4. Some pastors devote time to other gainful pursuits because of inadequate congregational support.
5. Some pastors lack confidence in the laity.

### B. *On the part of the laity*

1. Because of inadequate instruction in the Word, they do not know their Christian responsibility.
2. They often assume that it is only the pastor or other paid church workers who should assume responsibility for the work of the church, not believing every Christian has a personal call to be a steward.
3. They often fail to recognize that stewardship is more than the Sunday offering and that it includes time and other resources in everyday life.
4. Because they lack spiritual certainty they lack motivation regarding life's basic purpose and goals.
5. They fail to see that all of one's life is sacred before God.
6. They fail conscientiously and with bold confidence to put the things of the Kingdom of God first in life's relationships.

*After discussion and amendment of the group's recommendations, the following resolutions were adopted:*

### RESOLVED:

1. That ways be sought for a greater emphasis in Bible study, using methods that will most adequately meet the needs of people in daily life and acquaint them with the teachings of Scripture regarding stewardship.
  - a) That classes be divided according to the type of work such as teachers, medical workers, students, etc., for urban areas. It may be more feasible in rural areas to divide study groups according to age level.

- b) That the use of various methods of Bible study be encouraged to follow a particular need or program or emphasis in the church.
- 2. That intercongregational exchange of stewardship literature and information and experience be fostered, to include an exchange of church workers as much as possible.
- 3. That the sharing of ideas and experiences between different groups within the church be encouraged where the geographical, language, and church situation makes this possible.
- 4. That methods be adopted for an effective distribution of responsibility among the church members that they may discover the joy of work in the Kingdom of God.
- 5. That methods be adopted for adequate instruction for catechumens and others in what it means to be a church member.
- 6. That due and proper respect for the office of the ministry be encouraged and that pastors not be hampered in their ministry by details of administrative work and other tasks that the congregational members could assume.
- 7. That pastors be encouraged to keep aware of the implications for the church of civil and political development.
- 8. That DWM be urged to acquaint the churches with the services of the LWF Commission on Stewardship and Congregational Life.
- 9. That regular courses in Christian stewardship receive greater attention in the curricula of our theological colleges, Bible schools, and training institutes.

## CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP\*

*The report of the Discussion Group on Christian Citizenship was received, discussed, amended, and adopted as follows:*

It is to be stressed that unless the Christian Church comes to a clear understanding of matters relating to the Christian and politics, the church will find itself isolated from society and its needs and problems, and will be unable to work effectively in society.

Christian citizenship should aim at the proclamation of the love of Christ for all. It dare not be merely abstract and theoretical, but must make itself felt even by daring to be different. It is to be recognized that the Christian as a citizen *shares his citizenship* with those outside the church. The special mark of his citizenship appears in the quality of the service he renders. Christian citizenship implies both *privileges and responsibilities*.

Recognition of shared citizenship with the world requires that the individual Christian must be prepared to make himself felt—lest he and his Christian brethren be isolated from the world and thereby become unable to witness effectively in the world.

Christian participation in shared citizenship requires that in applying the love of God to our life in society the Christian should cherish, among others, the following principles as guideposts in dealing with society:

1. The dignity of man: that is, that the Christian should defend and support all that promotes the dignity of *all* men.
2. Equal access of all to the total heritage of a state: that is, that all men should have equal access to the benefits of society such as education, opportunity for work, social protection, etc.
3. Equality before the law: that is, that all men should enjoy the same privileges, safeguards, and protection before the law.

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\* Leader: Christian Baëta  
Consultants: Emmanuel Abraham  
                  Jonah Assadugu  
Secretary: Herbert Schaefer

To help implement the above conclusions and principles, the following recommendations and resolutions are adopted:

**RESOLVED:**

1. That we call upon all Christians and churches to give serious consideration to the duty and responsibilities of Christian citizenship, admitting their failure in the past to give emphasis to this factor in their corporate and individual lives.
2. That we recommend to all churches that they study seriously the question of how we as Christians can best take our place as citizens in our countries. To this end the following suggestions are made:
  - a) Churches should not participate in politics as churches but should prepare their members for citizenship by grounding them well in the Word of God and its demands for Christian living.
  - b) Concerning the pastor's role in relation to "shared citizenship":
    - 1) A pastor should not join or identify himself with any one political party but should strive to educate his people to understand the responsibilities of citizenship. He should not attack or uphold political parties as such, but center his witness on definite issues.
    - 2) A pastor, together with his church council, must take care to educate his people for tolerance—that is, respect for the individuality and freedom of the individual, so that members of differing views can meet and talk to each other.
    - 3) A pastor and his church should react to society and civic government according to the Word of the Gospel, regardless of party lines, affiliations, or fears.
    - 4) A pastor should consult his elders before speaking on controversial matters concerning community life.
  - c) Concerning the church: The church itself must be ready to speak according to the Scriptures on issues of citizenship which are right or wrong. To the end that it might better be able to do so, it might:
    - 1) Appoint a committee on social action (citizenship) to point out pertinent issues and recommend possible action.
    - 2) Educate all men that their responsibility to love their neighbor also includes responsibility toward society and government.
    - 3) Strengthen the councils of the church in their social consciousness.
    - 4) Encourage Christian lay participation in all areas of civic life, insofar as the Christian conscience permits.
    - 5) Point out the undeniable fact that each Christian holds dual citizenship—in God's Kingdom and in his own nation. Loyalty to God takes precedence over all, and this loyalty never contradicts the best interests of any nation.

## THE CHURCH IN ECONOMIC LIFE\*

*The report of the Discussion Group on the Church in Economic Life was received, amended, and adopted as follows:*

The task of the church is primarily to proclaim the love of God to all humanity, and the task of the individual Christian is to proclaim this love in all his relationships with his fellowmen.

Acknowledging that the mission of the church is by its nature spiritual, but also realizing that the church has had strong influence on the culture and economic life throughout the past centuries, we recommend to the conference that the church concern itself more actively with the social and economic life of the nations.

In order to enable themselves to do so, the churches may establish committees on social and economic matters, the task of which would be to study ways and means of improving the economy of the nations and also to make recommendations to the congregations to help them find methods for complete self-support.

The following are recommended to our churches:

1. The establishment of trade schools;
2. The introduction of small industries;
3. The conduct of agricultural experiment and demonstration projects in order to encourage the use of improved farming methods;
4. The giving of aid to needy and unemployed individuals to establish themselves in farming, business and/or other self-employment projects.
5. The encouragement of congregational leaders and members to increase their contributions by various methods such as tithing, larger offerings, special donations, etc.

It is further requested that the LWF offer its good offices in obtaining assistance and information from private or government agencies working in the fields of agricultural and industrial development when aid or information in these fields is requested by our churches or people.

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\* Leader: Ake Kastlund  
Secretary: Hagos Legesse

## THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION\*

*The report of the Discussion Group on Theological Education was received, amended, and adopted as follows:*

RESOLVED:

I. That we appeal to all Lutheran churches and mission bodies that there be

- a)* A new recognition of higher standards of theological education on all levels;
- b)* A commitment to theological education which is not only of a higher academic standard but also of a deeper spiritual quality. It is strongly urged that all candidates selected for the ministry should be men of true faith and imbued with the Holy Spirit, men who have met Christ in their lives and are wholeheartedly committed to Him.
- c)* A recognition by congregations and other concerned bodies that advanced training normally goes hand in hand with a need for better salaries and higher living standards.

II. That we recognize our obligation to train African professors for our theological institutions as soon as possible.

- a)* That to this end scholarships be requested from churches, missions, and the LWF for the training, both in Africa and abroad, of young men as pastors and theological professors. These scholarships should be granted not only for the B.D. and advanced degrees, but also, when necessary, for the B.A. degree which is required for advanced theological education. Whenever possible the B.A. degree should be taken in Africa.
- b)* That the Lutheran churches support the proposals now under discussion in IMC circles for short-term study retreats for professors and lecturers serving at African centers of theological education.

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\* Leader: Gustav Arén  
Consultant: Heinrich Meyer  
Secretary: Hezekiel Balira

III. That for the higher and deeper education of pastors

- a)* The general level of theological education be raised by improving and expanding existing Lutheran theological seminaries and colleges. This may necessitate concentration of efforts in regional institutions for the various areas of Africa. *The DWM is requested to make a study of the need and possibility for such joint action and make its findings available to the Lutheran churches of Africa.*
- b)* B.D. courses of study at union colleges such as Yaoundé (Cameroun) be recommended for the more mature and advanced students of the Lutheran churches in Africa, provided that there be one or more Lutheran professors on the staff, as well as a Lutheran chaplain and special halls for Lutheran students. It is strongly urged that all students sent to such courses must first have attended Lutheran seminaries, although they may have obtained a B.A. degree elsewhere.
- c)* All churches be urged to make available for their pastors periodic refresher courses.

IV. That whereas a better and deeper knowledge of God's Word is also necessary for the lay workers of the church, it is recognized that there is a necessity for giving theological instruction to church workers such as elders, teachers, nurses, and doctors.

V. That the establishment of a theological magazine for all the Lutheran churches of Africa be recommended and that DWM be asked to explore possibilities toward this end.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION\*

*The Discussion Group on Christian Education reported as follows:*

We began our discussion with detailed reports on the situation of Christian education in Madagascar, South Africa, and Tanganyika. These reports, enriched by contributions of members of the group, showed clearly that the conditions under which the church can exercise its educational task are in a state of change.

The nationalization of schools, if not already accomplished, is fast approaching in many countries in Africa. This compels the church to reconsider its forms of education, lest the young people, absorbed in their enthusiasm for the future, become indifferent to the church. Not only is Christian instruction in nationalized schools restricted or even practically eliminated, but the basic Christian principles are apt to give way to a secularized atmosphere which is influenced by political, social, or educational ideas from sources other than the Word of God. There are indications that in the present church schools which operate under government syllabus similar tendencies are already active.

*Upon recommendation the following resolutions were adopted by the conference:*

I. That the churches should be encouraged to examine their existing educational institutions in order to render a really effective Christian instruction and initiation to the future generations of church members.

1. Where the schools can still serve as instruments of genuine missionary outreach they should be expanded. The largest possible share in the support of teachers and in the establishment of buildings for classrooms and teachers' housing should be taken over by the congregations or communities desiring such schools.

2. Where the churches operate a system of schools with government aid and under government syllabus, special care should be taken:

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\* Leader: Mr. Andriamanantenaoa  
Consultant: Rolf A. Syrdal

- a) To reserve sufficient time for Christian instruction and to make an effective use of that time;
- b) To work out a graded program for Christian instruction, including the appropriate textbooks and aids for teachers, which is well adapted to refresh the interest of the students through all their school age (it is to be hoped that the churches in the various countries would among themselves work out such programs);
- c) To give practical, concrete, and living instruction which helps the students to relate the faith of the church and Christian living realistically to their everyday life. Too abstract words should be avoided or, if necessary, explained sufficiently.

3. Where the government has taken over the schools the churches should be concerned

- a) That hours reserved for religious instruction by the churches be used to unite the students either in the school itself or in the church for instruction by a well-trained teacher or the pastor;
- b) To strengthen the work of Sunday schools (or Thursday schools in French influenced countries);
- c) To establish hostels for students wherever possible and to find adequate staff for such hostels.

4. The churches should in each case strengthen the service of Christian teachers

- a) By concentrating on the formal upgrading of teachers' training institutes as well as by helping the teachers to render witness by an integral Christian life;
- b) By giving help in the production of adequate teaching material and by offering refresher courses in Christian instruction to the teachers;
- c) By furthering the establishment of Christian teachers' associations which would serve not only for the discussion and improvement of teaching methods but would provide fellowship for the mutual strengthening of Christian teachers in the spirit of service and mission.

II. The task of Christian education, although taken up in most churches in Africa mainly by the schools, should be seen under its other vital aspects as well, among which the following are mentioned here:

1. Christian education begins in the homes. By the ordinary preaching and by the pastoral care in the congregations, parents, and especially mothers, should be given continuous help in the educational ministry to their children.
2. Sufficient training for conducting the preparation of children and adults for full membership in the church, in confirmation classes as

well as in pre-baptismal instruction of adults, should be given to future pastors and evangelists.

3. The churches should find adequate ways to reach their confirmed members with Bible studies and Christian instruction. Special occasions like the preparation for marriage and special opportunities like the desire for literacy among adults should be taken up.

4. The youth work of the churches should be strengthened, especially where the schools are under growing government influence. The establishment of youth associations, church-related scout movements, youth centers, etc., should be encouraged according to the respective situation. Of vital importance is the active participation of youth in the evangelization of the non-Christian young people around them.

5. In view of the flood of rather dubious kinds of literature which is sweeping at present especially over the young people, all possible efforts should be made to publish good Christian literature books as well as periodicals.

6. In a time when new universities will be formed all over Africa and be of great importance for the intellectual and spiritual progress in the African countries, we have the responsibility of encouraging devoted Christians who are suitably qualified to offer their services as professors at these universities. It is requested that church and mission agency executives and the LWF be alert to develop all possibilities in this field.

# MISSION-CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS\*

*The Discussion Group on Mission-Church Relationships submitted to the conference the following informational report, describing relationships in selected areas:*

## *1. Ethiopia*

### *a) Hermannsburg Mission Society*

The society has been at work in Ethiopia for 30 years, interrupted by two wars. This has permitted missionaries no more than 13 years of work. Consequently, an autonomous church was mandatory almost from the beginning. The work has moved forward steadily. The missionaries are welcome partners and participate in the church council meetings as counselors. Ethiopian pastors and evangelists are paid out of a central treasury supported by the congregations.

Buildings for worship (with one exception) are owned by the church. The mission holds some property leases for school work and a hospital. It has been asked to provide more educational support and to enlarge this area of work. The emphasis of Islam and the Roman Church on educational work makes it very important that candidates for the ministry be given every opportunity for a good education.

### *b) Norwegian Lutheran Mission Society*

Nationals have been in the leadership of the church in South Ethiopia from the beginning. The opinion was expressed that a church should not be so cumbersome an organization that it is too difficult for the members to govern it, that a newly established church should not attempt too much, and that hospitals and other expensive institutions are not essential to the church's work.

Mission and church are not integrated in South Ethiopia. Under the circumstances prevailing this would not be judicious.

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\* Leader: Arne Pilgaard Pedersen  
Consultant: Stefano Moshi  
Secretary: Fredrik A. Schiotz

## *2. Liberia*

Even though the mission is 100 years old, yet its aim—the establishment of an indigenous Lutheran Church in Liberia—was realized only 13 years ago. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Liberia was organized in 1947. The presidency of the church has been filled by two missionary pastors and, since 1957, by a national pastor. The ELCL was received as an associate synod by the United Lutheran Church in America at its biennial convention in October 1948.

The church and the mission conference are interrelated in some ways, but each exists as a separate organization. The mission conference has charge of medical work and higher education. At present evangelism, literacy, and elementary education are the responsibility of the church.

For administrative purposes the church is divided into 3 districts, 14 parishes, and 37 congregations. District, parish, and congregational councils supervise the work within their respective areas.

The church and mission conference are working through a committee of Liberians and missionaries to review basic policy and develop a new constitution leading toward integrating the work of the church and mission, so that all the work will eventually be the responsibility of one organization, the church. Missionaries will work as a part of the Liberian Lutheran Church and not within a separate mission organization.

## *3. Nigeria*

The Lutheran Church of Christ in Northern Nigeria has been autonomous since 1954. The church became responsible for pastors, evangelism, discipline, and polity. Houses of worship, a Bible school, and a union theological college (owned co-operatively) are owned by the church. The mission owns schools and hospitals and supervises their work. Wherever funds from abroad are needed for the support of institutions, the mission maintains control.

The church, it was stated, is more fully autonomous when its sphere of responsibility is limited to the essential work of the church. Consultation with mutual respect goes on continually between mission and church.

## *4. Rhodesia*

In Southern Rhodesia the church is at work on a constitution such as that in the Lutheran Church of Northern Tanganyika (see below). There are six Africans and six missionaries, plus the bishop on the constitution committee. One African on the committee stated when discussing the Church Council that is to be brought into being, "Let us not divide the council's representation 50/50 according to race, but let us use the men whom we desire because they are best qualified to lead the church."

Is it not possible to forget the question of race in the church? The missionaries desire to do the service they have been commissioned to do as long as this is the will of God—no longer.

## 5. *South Africa*

### a. *Hermannsburg Mission Society (Transvaal Synod)*

A new church was organized at the beginning of 1960. The constitution has not yet been completed, but it is hoped that this will be ready by the end of the year. According to the draft of the constitution to be submitted to the church, there will be complete integration of church and mission as in Northern Tanganyika (see below).

The relationship between mission and church is good. Presently, a church council of which an African is the chairman, discusses all issues relating to the work of the church.

### b. *The Evangelical Lutheran Church (Zulu-Xhosa-Swazi Region)*

An autonomous church was organized in July 1960 and will begin to function January 1, 1961. The church will have an assembly that will meet at least biennially. Between assemblies the work of the church is administered by a church council.

A missionary council will serve as liaison between the church and mission boards. Requests for help will be routed through the missionary council.

Missionaries will be called by the church and will serve under the church council. They will be associate members of the church.

The theological school will be under the church, but will be supported by the mission boards.

According to South African law, the African Church can own property only in Bantu areas. Some properties will therefore have to remain in the hands of the missions. Medical institutions and houses occupied as missionary residences will be owned by the missions. All schools except a few private ones are government owned.

## 6. *Tanganyika*

### a) *The Lutheran Church of Northern Tanganyika*

Formerly there were two administrative agencies: the mission and the church. The people were not happy about this; it created suspicion. Therefore it was decided to integrate the mission with the church. This was done in 1959. Since then co-operation has been much better.

The Church Council numbers twenty-one. There is no stipulation concerning missionary and African representation. Presently there are 17 Africans and 4 missionaries on the council. All questions of financial subsidy from the West are discussed in the council.

The missionaries continue to have meetings of their own, but these are only for problems that relate to missionary salaries, the education of their children, furnishing of their homes, and furlough travel.

The Department of World Missions Cooperation of the National Lutheran Council sends its executive to Tanganyika each year that he may counsel with the church about problems of support and personnel. In reply to a question whether it would be better for the executive to live in Tanganyika and visit New York once a year, the church president replied, "Not until there is a united Lutheran Church of Tanganyika."

The church was not happy with divided ownership of property. It smacks of colonialism. Arrangements are now being made for the transfer of all property to the church.

It was reported by the Lutheran Church of Northern Tanganyika that a first-term missionary is advised six months before furlough whether his return is desired. After the first term it is understood that the missionary is wanted after each successive furlough period unless he is notified to the contrary.

*b) Usambara-Digo Lutheran Church*

The relationship between mission and church is much the same as that in the Lutheran Church of Northern Tanganyika. Between synod meetings the work is administered by an Executive Committee. There are a number of small standing committees that are responsible to the Executive Committee.

The transfer of ownership of all property to the church is under consideration. The Vuga Press, which was formerly administered by the Federation of Lutheran Churches of Tanganyika, will in the future be owned and operated by the church on behalf of all Tanganyika Lutherans.

The church sponsors missionary work among laborers on the estates and to a primitive tribe. The support comes from the church, for there are no government grants for the bush schools and medical clinics in this work.

*7. The stimulative effect of autonomy and full responsibility*

It was observed that the acquirement of political independence in a nation seems to stimulate churches to greater willingness in the assumption of responsibilities. Special note was taken of the experience of the Batak Church in Indonesia, the Gossner Church in India, and the church founded by the Hermannsburg Society in Ethiopia: the interruption of missionary participation occasioned by war did not stop the growth of the work. It seemed rather to prod the church into greater activity.

*The group submitted the following points of view and suggestions for the consideration of the conference:*

**1. Are missionaries wanted in the Lutheran churches of Africa today?**

This question, sometimes raised by missionaries in this day of transition, tends to puzzle the African. There was general agreement that the large unfinished task of evangelization requires continued use of missionary personnel and that the African churches earnestly desire this help.

**2. The calling of missionaries**

In cases where full integration of mission and church has been achieved, requests for missionary personnel with some specification of the type of work to be done should be made by the church. The call should be extended by the home board.

**3. The theology of the call**

The following summary of what is involved in a call received the group's consensus:

- a) The basic call to every man is to salvation in Christ.*
- b) Every believer is called to be a witness and to serve Christ.*
- c) Whether the inner call to witness is a call to serve as a missionary in a given church is not a matter of knowledge but of faith. And the faith is a faith in which two parties participate:*
  - (1) The missionary candidate.*
  - (2) The board and the church in which the candidate is to serve.*

When both parties can say "I believe," this mutual faith is acknowledged to be a call of the Holy Spirit for service in a designated place and manner.
- d) If a situation arises which *after careful discussion and prayer* is acknowledged by either party to the call as removing the possibility of further effective service in a given place and manner, the call to serve in that place and manner ceases. No one is ever released from the basic call to witness and to serve Christ. But the manner, place, and auspices under which this is done, may vary as God gives *his guidance*.*

**4. African Lutheran churches should be entrusted with full autonomy in the work of the church, with the right to select their own leaders, be they African or European, and to do so without the necessity for action to be ratified by a home board.**

It was agreed that conditions vary from country to country. But if Africans are not in positions of leadership and responsibility, people outside the church regard it as an ecclesiastical colony. It helps non-Christians to understand the intent of missionaries if Africans are in charge. And when the leadership is African the membership in the church itself is more apt to regard the church as their own.

### *5. Transfer of Property*

The question of the advisability of handing over all mission properties to the churches at this time received extensive consideration. It was noted that not only government policies but also plans of churches and missions varied so greatly in different countries that no single recommendation could be given that will apply to all property issues. However, it was agreed that houses of worship and other properties essential to the work of the church should be owned by the church if laws of the land would permit. Whether ownership of other types of institutions and missionary residences should be transferred to the church would depend on local circumstances.

### *6. Partners in Missionary Outreach*

Whatever changes may occur in the organizational structure of the churches in Africa, there was warm agreement that the primary responsibility of the church is to reach out to those who have not heard the gospel. The size of this task is such that it will command the full attention of mission and church. It is therefore recommended that the next All-Africa Lutheran Conference give primary attention to the consideration of a more effective partnership of mission and church in reaching out to the unevangelized.

*The report was adopted by the conference after discussion and amendment.*

*SPECIAL REPORTS*

## THE MALAGASY LUTHERAN CHURCH

RAKOTO ANDRIANARIJAONA

It is now 94 years since Lutheranism came to Madagascar. The work founded by just two Norwegian missionaries in days gone by has developed greatly. There are now 3,000 congregations and over 200,000 members.

If the work has thus prospered, it is because Madagascar is one of the islands where the mother churches have worked closely together in their missionary endeavors. It was the Lutherans from Norway who founded the work. Then, more than 70 years ago, American Lutherans took over a share in the work and a field here; and for the last 60 years or more Lutherans in France have been of great help, particularly in school work. Mission work had barely started when the missionaries and national Christians began to work together through various types of councils.

Ten years ago a single Malagasy Lutheran Church was organized; all the churches resulting from Lutheran mission work are now united in one general synod. The general synod is divided into six Regional Synods.

One thing that made it easier for the church to propagate itself was the fact that the missions made school work and the nurture of youth an important part of their endeavors. Through this they obtained very early in the history of their work some very able national co-laborers.

At the very beginning the missions began to train Malagasy pastors. This endeavor is continuing and offers great hope for the future. But it is sad that nowadays many Malagasy young men who feel and accept the call to the ministry cannot be received at the seminary because the housing there is inadequate.

Since the Lutheran Church in Madagascar became one, it has directed its endeavors toward extending the work and making a deeper impact on the life of the people. Progress and change are the order of the day, and serious efforts must be made to keep the children and young people within the fold of the church.

Sunday school work is being made the object of a special effort, and

the missions and the church are working together to produce Sunday school literature and up-to-date pedagogical material. The promotion of Sunday school work is not being left just to the individual congregations, but there is a central committee consisting of people with special abilities along this line. This work especially needs the help of the representatives of the Lutheran churches in Europe and America, who continue to make their services available among us to the greater glory of Christ.

We see at present a joint effort of the church in all of Madagascar to take over their share of the responsibility for secondary education. Students in the secondary schools of the Malagasy Lutheran Church now number over 1,000. One of these secondary schools is the place where we are meeting; the principal of the school is a Malagasy.

Within the framework of the Malagasy Lutheran Church is an important welfare activity founded by the missions: a school for the blind, two leper hospitals, two hospitals (one large and very well equipped), and a large new school for the deaf and dumb. Lutherans here recognized that these institutions also are means of preaching the gospel.

The Malagasy Lutheran Church faces a new day in which their nation is making rapid progress. It trusts that the strength of the Lord will make it a salt and a leaven here in Madagascar.

A great responsibility which the new day is thrusting upon the church in this day is Home Missions (Mission Intérieure). And the efforts so far made are being crowned with success by the Lord of the church.

## NIGERIA: THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE SUDAN

AKILA TODI

At the time of the first All-Africa Lutheran Conference our church was very young, just over one year old. It became an autonomous church in May 1954. What has happened during the last five years since we met at Marangu? I will give some statistics to show the progress made.

In 1955 we had a communicant membership of 4,082—today we have 8,180, which means that the number has been more than doubled.

In 1955 we reported that an average of 876 (adults and infants) were baptized per year. In 1959 the number was 1,976.

In 1955 the church had members in 300 villages, today in 369.

In 1955 the church had 9 Nigerian pastors, today 20.

We had only 1 Bible school in 1955, now we have 3.

We have now 36 primary schools, against 18 in 1955.

In our Teacher Training Center we have 71 students today, against 27 in 1955.

This shows some of the progress made, but there are also weak points in our church. I will mention two, namely, the low educational standard of our evangelists and the small financial resources of the church. Most of our evangelists have had no proper education, but have received instruction by other evangelists in Bible and baptism classes and in a kind of adult literacy class. They have done invaluable service in the spreading of the gospel, but better educated men are now needed to take care of the local village congregations. A scheme for the training of catechists is being carried out on our three Bible schools but progress is slow compared with the need.

The financial position of the church is unsatisfactory as the total income of the church in 1959 amounted to approximately £2,500 which is insufficient for payment of proper salaries to church personnel as well as for other necessary expenses.

The relations between the church and the Danish branch of the Sudan United Mission are good. No integration has taken place, but the church and the mission are independent organizations working together.

In May this year a Nigerian was elected president of the church. The number of missionaries has been increasing as many still are needed for special jobs in the church. Missionaries are in charge of our three Bible schools as well as of the Theological College, and financial support is being received from the mission toward the running expenses of these institutions. The mission also assists in carrying out a youth work program. Primary schools have so far been run by the mission, but in 1959 the church agreed to take over these schools as soon as possible, and the necessary arrangements are being carried out. Medical work, including a general hospital, 11 dispensaries and 2 leper segregation villages, is being run by the mission.

The church is aware of its missionary obligation, and the mission work being carried out by the Danish Church in our area is no substitute for the mission work of our own church. The General Church Council recruits able evangelists who are being sent out into unreached areas to preach the gospel, and God has blessed their work. During the last five years the Danish Mission has applied to government three times for permission to open a mission station in a certain area, but it has been refused. The mission of the church has now sent two evangelists into that area and they have settled down to work.

The church is living in a predominantly Muslim country; this is a challenge to us. We have joined with other churches in a project to enlighten our church members on the right attitude to Muslims and to Islamic doctrines, and thereby we hope to enable ourselves to present the gospel to Muslims more effectively.

Before we return to Nigeria from this conference, our country will have become fully independent. We are grateful to God for this national achievement, but we realize that it places new responsibilities on the Christian Church in Nigeria. May God help us to carry out his great plans for our country.

## ETHIOPIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH—MEKANE YESUS

EMMANUEL GEBRE SILLASSIE  
HERBERT G. SCHAEFER

During the year 1959 the Ethiopian Evangelical Church—Mekane Yesus has been richly blessed by the Lord. The most outstanding events of the year were as follows:

During the third week of January the second General Assembly of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church—Mekane Yesus was held in Addis Ababa. At this Assembly Meeting the constitution for the formation of the church which had been adopted in April of 1958 was ratified. Also the Gimbi Synod of the West formally joined the church. With the signing of the constitution by the Gimbi Synod the number of synods forming the Ethiopian Evangelical Church—Mekane Yesus was brought to four. We feel that this is a great thing which the Lord has worked in our midst, as it brings together most of the Lutheran congregations of Ethiopia into one church. It has brought also into the church the work of the Norwegian, Swedish, German, and American Lutheran Missions. The total membership of the church is estimated to be 31,539 souls. Of these 18,961 are baptized members and 12,578 are communicant members. This membership is organized in 135 independent congregations and well over 200 preaching centers. It is served by 27 Ethiopian pastors. The number of schools in the church area is 50, and the number of students attending these schools is 5,300.

During the year 1959 plans were made and brought into effect for the establishment of a Joint Theological Seminary and a Joint Literature Center which will serve the church. It is hoped that these can be put into effect during this year.

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church—Mekane Yesus is independent. It is also largely self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. Most of the congregations are completely self-supporting, and receive no funds from abroad.

The problems facing the church are many; but perhaps the most pressing is a lack of evangelists and pastors to nurture those souls already in the church and to give instruction to those desiring to become Christians. Another pressing problem of the church is that as a new church much has yet to be done in order to organize the congregations and synods into functional groups. We are confident, however, that the Lord will bless us with wisdom, courage, patience, and love.

## THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN LIBERIA

EZRA D. KELLER

We begin this report by joyfully announcing the celebration on April 27, 1960, of the 100th anniversary of Lutheran work in Liberia.

But though the mission is 100 years old, yet its aim—the establishment of an indigenous Lutheran church in Liberia—was realized only 13 years ago. After a long, sacrificial struggle through the years, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Liberia was organized in 1947. The church convention met at Muhlenberg—the first station opened in 1860—to adopt a constitution and elect its first officers. The presidency of the church has been filled by two missionary pastors and, since 1957, by a national pastor. The ELCL was received as an associate synod by the United Lutheran Church in America at its biennial convention in October 1948.

The church and the mission conference are interrelated in some ways, but each exists as a separate organization. The mission conference has charge of medical work and higher education. At present evangelism, literacy, and elementary education are the responsibility of the church.

For administrative purposes the church is divided into 3 districts, 14 parishes, and 37 congregations. District, parish, and congregational councils supervise the work within their respective areas.

The church and the mission conference are working through a committee of Liberians and missionaries to restudy basic policy and develop a new constitution leading toward integrating the work of the church and mission, so that all the work will eventually be the responsibility of one organization, the church. Missionaries will work as a part of the Liberian Lutheran Church and not within a separate mission organization.

In 1960, the Lutheran Church is found in 108 towns and villages, largely of the Kpelle and Loma tribes, beginning from Monrovia and extending 200 miles inland along the St. Paul River to the border of Guinea. In these villages there are over 5,000 baptized, 2,000 confirmed, and 1,000 communing members. They are served by both

missionary and national pastors, and 44 evangelists, catechists, Bible women, and trained lay leaders. At present we have four national pastors.

The church is exercising self-propagation through its deacons and laymen. The church is nurtured by pastors who, stepping out of our own airplane on jungle landing strips, reach the most remote areas to administer the sacraments. Many of these small airfields, 15 in all, have been built by villagers themselves. The church is receiving requests from villages near and far for catechists. Refresher courses in the parishes and a Christian Workers' Course at our Lutheran Training Institute are offered annually for catechists, evangelists, lay leaders, and Bible women. Deacons' Institutes and Evangelistic Camps are held several times a year.

Instability of population in several large parishes is cause for concern. This mobility of the tribal people is brought about by social and economic pressures. Old villages disappear and new ones are built as good roads penetrate remote jungle areas. An entire clan area becomes a rubber plantation and villages become workers' camps. Men are drawn to urban-industrial centers in search of employment.

The Lutheran Church has, in the past, directed its efforts toward reaching tribal Liberians in the small rural communities of the interior. Recently, however, the church has initiated new work in the rapidly developing urban-industrial areas.

Significant beginnings have already been made in two rubber plantations and two mining areas. A Loma-speaking missionary pastor has been assigned to Kpelle language study. As our first "trilingual" missionary, he will develop a social service ministry.

The church is publishing 1,400 copies of weekly news-sheets at our two literacy centers in the Kpelle and Loma areas. Four thousand copies of the Gospel of Mark are in the hands of new literates, along with Luke, John, and the Epistle and Gospel Lessons.

Books on child care, hygiene, African leaders, land buying, Bible study, safety, etc., are bought at the rate of 35,000 a year from 174 literacy teachers, most of whom are volunteer workers. Where once there was a great need for means and methods to help our people learn to read in their own language, today we have a strong literacy program in our church. As a result we see:

The Word of God, written in their own language, speaks to our people, and the church is strengthened and built up. Many others show their first interest in the Christian faith through the church's publications.

Literacy publications touch every aspect of life, interpret and introduce changes. Women, slow at first to want to read, now realize that the literacy program has something to offer them.

For the first time, all the delegates to the 1959 convention of the

church were literate. Consequently, reports were translated into Kpelle and mimeographed for the use of those who could not speak or read English.

Since English is the official language of the nation, the government encourages the tribal people to learn English. Our church literacy program co-operates in this venture. Material is being prepared to teach the literate Kpelle or Loma person to read and speak English.

A little more than 1,000 pupils attend our 17 elementary schools and one high school. Fresh leadership is growing up within the church through the intensive cultivation provided in the program of the Lutheran Training Institute and High School. In the first decade of its existence, the high school has graduated 84 students—63 men and 21 women.

Two of our four district elementary schools are now headed by our own college graduates, four others are teaching in our church schools, and three are on the staff of the high school. Another college graduate is serving in the literacy program of the church.

Cuttington College is the only church school in Liberia offering college training. It is an institution of the Protestant Episcopal Mission, but Lutherans and others co-operate in its program and contribute toward its support.

In all of our 14 parishes our members are just beginning to realize the importance of giving toward the on-going program of the church, through the following means:

- (1) Voluntary pledges by church workers to give a certain per cent of their monthly income.
- (2) A church apportionment goal of 1c per day per communing member.
- (3) Harvest thanksgiving offerings that go toward the support of the motherless infants in the Nursery.
- (4) Giving toward church building funds and for the support of national workers.
- (5) Giving for special offerings, such as emergency help for villages destroyed by fire, Lutheran World Action, and work in the Lutheran mission field of Malaya.

A new emphasis is being placed on religious education in our parishes through the Sunday schools. Preparation of materials for teachers and pupils is a task just begun.

A new venture in co-operation in medical work is the new \$950,000 Phebe Hospital, now in the planning stage—a joint project of Lutherans, Methodists, and Episcopalians in Liberia. To be centrally located near the Cuttington College campus, Phebe Hospital will be a well-equipped, modern medical installation, offering Christian medical service to the

people of Liberia as well as providing high-quality training for nurses and medical assistants.

An important advance in the church's service to its own workers was the establishing of a pension plan, put into operation under a board of trustees in January 1957. Since then over 113 national workers have joined. The contributions to this fund are made by church or mission and by the participating member.

There is no National Christian Council, or comparable organization in Liberia. A loose association of missions and churches in the Committee of Reference and Counsel provides some opportunity for mutual study of problems, fellowship, and co-operation. A comity arrangement of long standing, and the vast areas yet untouched, have prevented much overlapping or competition among Christian groups.

We have enjoyed government co-operation and encouragement in the church's service to the people of Liberia, particularly through the interest of government in our educational and medical institutions. The government has recently granted a yearly subsidy of \$5,000 each for educational and medical work. In addition, \$75,000 has been pledged toward the construction of the new hospital.

## THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

PAULUS B. MHLUNGU

There are over 400,000 Lutherans in South Africa. Various traditions have kept us working as independent synods in the provinces.

The oldest Lutheran church was built in Cape Town in 1792 by settlers from Holland and Germany. The Moravian Mission was the first to start mission work in 1737, followed by German, Scandinavian, and American Lutherans.

In the Transvaal the Berlin Mission has two synods, and in the western Transvaal, Hermannsburg has organized a Lutheran church with Tswana as the church's language. In the Cape Province and Orange Free State, the Moravian and the Berlin Missions have done very important work. In Natal, especially among the Zulus, mission work was started first by the Berlin Mission followed by the Norwegian, Swedish, and American missions.

In South Africa there are also synods using the German language and congregations using Scandinavian languages.

There has been for many years important constitutional work going on toward a united Lutheran church. In July of this year the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Zulu-Xhosa-Swazi Region, was formed out of synods previously connected with the Berlin, Norwegian, Swedish, and American missions. This region embraces Natal, Swaziland, and parts of the Cape, Transvaal, and Orange Free State Provinces.

The body in which all or nearly all Lutheran church bodies are represented is the Council of Churches on Lutheran Foundation, and since 1957, the Lutheran World Federation has supported the forming of new congregations using the English language. There are at present five such congregations.

Commissioned by the British and Foreign Bible Society Lutherans have been responsible for the revision of the Zulu Bible and are bearing the heavier burden of the revision of the Bible in Tswana and Northern Sesutho. The missions are now also directing their efforts to the evangelization of the Indian population that we find mainly in Natal.

## THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN THE CAMEROUN

F. MARTIN BRAATEN\*

The Cameroun, formerly a trust territory of the United Nations under French protection, acquired independence on January 1, 1960. With an area of about 166,000 square miles, the territory divides itself into five large natural regions.

The wooded coastal plain which borders on the Gulf of Guinea has a hot climate. The southern plateau averaging 1,900 feet in altitude, is covered with dense forest. The mountainous western region has an altitude of over 3,200 feet. Upon reaching the Adamaoua plateau, with an altitude of from 2,400 feet to 4,600 feet, one enters the treeless plain area with a relatively dry, cool climate.

Continuing northward one leaves the Adamaoua plateau and descends abruptly to the plains of the Bénoué River and Lake Chad, a zone of savannahs and steppes, having a tropical climate, dry and hot.

In the Cameroun, an essentially agricultural country, the principal activity of the people is the production of foodstuffs within the traditional framework of the tribal life. Food products still constitute more than 90 per cent of the harvested tonnage; the remaining 10 per cent constitutes products for export.

The population of the Cameroun numbers approximately 3,500,000, of whom 20,000 are Europeans. The inhabitants are divided among a large number of peoples and tribes. Although there are more than 140 ethnic groups in the Cameroun, they can be classed in two main groupings, the "Bantu" in the south and the "Sudanese" in the north.

In the north the influence of the Foulbés is preponderant. This Islamic people invaded a large part of the Cameroun at the beginning of the 19th century. Driving back or subjugating the Sudanese people, they occupied all of the North Cameroun as far as to the edge of the great forest. The Foulbés established states called "lamidats" or sultanates

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\* Although the Cameroun delegation was prevented from attending because of travel arrangement difficulties, this report, prepared in advance, was read at the conference.

which even today retain a large part of their authority. Among the Foulbés, slavery has never been abolished and is a part of their social system. In spite of the fact that the Foulbés have propagated the Islamic religion among the tribes they subjugated, there are still important groups of tribes which have escaped their influence and have remained fetishists. It is among these pagans that the Lutheran missions work.

At the present time there are three Lutheran groups working in the Cameroun. "The Lutheran Brethren Mission," which arrived first, began its work in 1920 and occupied the vast and thickly populated plain extending from Garoua to Lake Chad.

In 1923 American Lutheran missionaries arrived on the high Adamaua plateau and opened a station at Mboula among the Bayas, a people still very slightly influenced by Islam. "The Sudan Mission" opened 8 other stations among the same tribe, 2 in the central African Republic and 6 in the Cameroun. In 1938 a new effort was undertaken in the Garoua area among the Namdjis, a primitive tribe which had also escaped the influence of Islam. Then in 1952, permission was granted to the Sudan Mission to open a station at Tcholliré in the Sultanate of Rey Bouba on the condition that an Industrial Center be established. Although he maintains a cordial relationship with the missionaries, the Sultan of Rey Bouba shows himself very unfavorably disposed toward the evangelization of his people.

In 1952 Norwegian missionaries sent by the Norwegian Mission Society in Stavanger arrived in the Adamaua area, opening stations at Ngaoundéré and Tibati for the purpose of evangelizing the Mboums, a people under the domination of the Foulbés. The work among these people was extremely difficult, due to the fact that they are almost entirely Mohammedanized. The Norwegian Mission therefore turned toward the fetishists of this region. French schools established by the mission were well received and this work has had encouraging results.

Each of the three Lutheran missions has its own annual conference where they discuss problems bearing on the organization of the work on the mission field. A number of discussions have been held with a view to the eventual union of the Lutheran churches of the Cameroun.

Although the Lutheran Brethren Mission is opposed, at least for the present, to any union, contacts have begun to be established between the Norwegian Mission and the Sudan Mission. For several years there has been collaboration in the medical work at Mgaoundéré where the two missions have a joint hospital. With the purpose of joining their efforts and their means, the two missions opened a joint Normal School in 1958 and a Theological Seminary in 1959. The two missions, in collaboration with African representatives, are in the process of preparing a constitution with a view to forming a self-governing Lutheran

Church recognized by the Cameroun government. We hope that this constitution can be put into effect this year to coincide with the year of the Cameroun Republic's independence.

The aim of the Sudan Mission has for a long time been to encourage the establishing of a church independent of all foreign aid. Although this aim has not yet been realized, we have already taken the first step in creating autonomous districts. In each district is held an annual conference, presided over by an African, during which the program of church activities for the year is planned. The conference appoints the catechists, places them, and determines the salary of each. It also decides on all questions of discipline which have not been settled by the local church. The candidates to be sent to the Bible School are chosen at the conference. The treasurer of the district is an African elected by the conference. No subsidy is granted to the district by the mission, all expenses being the responsibility of the local church. In addition, the district is required to contribute to the central treasury. Thus the church governs and supports itself without outside help. During the year, the District Council, the president of which is an African, is responsible for any question which comes normally within the jurisdiction of the conference.

What, then, is the role of the missionary? In each district there is a missionary who represents the mission and who plays the part of a counselor. This position is still essential, due to the catechists' and deacons' lack of experience and training. The missionary's salary and the cost of station upkeep are, naturally, the responsibility of the mission.

At the Church Conference, which meets every two years, all the districts are represented. "The Big Conference," as it is called, decides questions of interest to all the districts. Thus, financial questions, such as the salaries of catechists and evangelists responsible to the church, are decided upon. Members of the Church Council are elected, as well as the treasurer of the Central Treasury. The hospital evangelist is appointed, and a call is sent out for a catechist to volunteer to go and work in the North Cameroun among the Tchambas.

Among the three aspects of the work of the church (evangelization, education, and medical work) it is always in the area of evangelization that we make our greatest effort. There are 13 missionaries, 3 African pastors, 2 African evangelists, 171 paid catechists, and 74 unpaid catechists who work toward this goal. In the districts there are 209 parishes and 185 preaching places. The number of church members is 7,273 and the number of catechumens, 8,981.

School work occupies a very important place in our program. There are 10 missionaries who are engaged in this work and more than 30 African teachers. We have 10 French schools recognized by the Camer-

our government. All the unrecognized bush schools were closed in 1959 by government order. This reduced the number of pupils enrolled in our schools, but we believe we have a better education program due to the fact that the teachers are now better qualified than formerly. In addition, there are two industrial schools, one in the north specializing in mechanics and one in the south specializing in woodworking. A domestic science school recognized by the State has been functioning for five years. This technical instruction seems to be well received.

A Normal School, where the future teachers of our schools are prepared, was opened at Ngaoundéré in co-operation with the Norwegian Mission. At present, most of our teachers come from South Cameroun, which involves high traveling expenses. Furthermore, they often find themselves out of their element, living among a people of strange language and customs. In five years it will be possible to replace the teachers coming from the South with new teachers coming from our Normal School.

By engaging in medical work, the church simply follows the example set by the Lord during his ministry. At Ngaoundéré the Norwegian Mission and the Sudan Mission have together established a hospital which is already renowned throughout all of the North Cameroun. A program of training African nurses is being carried on. At Garoua-Boulai the Sudan Mission has opened a second hospital which serves the southern part of the mission field as well as the part within the Central African Republic. In addition, there are 4 dispensaries, two of which are maintained by African nurses trained at the Protestant Missions' Hospital in Ngaoundéré.

The training of pastors and catechists had been somewhat neglected during the early years, but we are working hard to make up for lost time. In 1959, a theological seminary was opened in co-operation with the Norwegian Mission. The first class should complete its work in 1962, after three years of study. The Bible School is at Baboua, in the Central African Republic. In this school, where the instruction is given in the Baya language, are trained the catechists coming from all the southern districts. A second Bible School is planned for the North. Here the instruction will be in the Fulfulde language.

In spite of the fact that we are behind in the development of literature, we are now in a fair way to fill the gap. The translation of the New Testament into the Baya language has already been completed, and it is at the printer's. Also, the translation of the New Testament into the Fulfulde is practically done. This translation has been made in co-operation with the Norwegian Mission and the Lutheran Brethren Mission. The Sudan Mission has at present 5 missionaries who are translating religious works in the Baya and Fulfulde languages.

## THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN RHODESIA

MASOBA MOYO

In talking about our church work in Southern Rhodesia it is natural to refer briefly to the geographical set-up and the population of this country. Southern Rhodesia is one of the three territories that form the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. In size it is the second largest.

When the Federation was inaugurated in 1953 the population of Southern Rhodesia was as follows:

Africans	2,130,000
Europeans	160,000
Asians	4,700
Mixed races	6,700

With regard to size, the Federation is larger than the Union of South Africa.

The geographical unit now covered by the Church of Sweden Mission (now the African Evangelical Lutheran Church) comprises a territory from Belingwe in the North to the Limpopo in the South and from a line west of Gwanda to some 80 miles east of Beit Bridge. The languages used within this geographical unit are Chikaranga, Sindebele, Sotho, and Venda.

Southern Rhodesia is also rich in minerals, the most important minerals being asbestos, gold, coal, and chrome. Near Chegato, another mission station of ours, emerald deposits of the finest quality were discovered in 1958.

The people of Southern Rhodesia live mainly on farming and cattle rearing. Africans and European farmers produce large quantities of maize, which is the staple food of this country. Furthermore, Southern Rhodesia is an important meat producer. It now has more than 3,000,000 head of cattle, of which 60 per cent is owned by Africans, especially in the southern part of the country, known as Matabeleland.

The initial mission work in this part of Africa or the Federation is in one way or another connected with the great explorer David Living-

stone, who came to this country in the 19th century. His exploration of this country stimulated Christians abroad to come out as missionaries.

He also opened up this country for trade in ordinary goods instead of the "slave trade," which was then practiced in this part of the country.

The year 1903 is considered as the year when mission work of the Church of Sweden Mission was started in Southern Rhodesia. The Church of Sweden had been working in Southern Africa for about 25 years, when, toward the very end of the last century, it was decided to try and extend the activities to Matabeleland in Southern Rhodesia. In that year two pioneers settled in this country, one at a place called Selukwe (now a chrome mine) and the other at a place called Vukwe, near the present Mnene Mission. Ill health and death put a sudden end to the work at Selukwe, and even the missionary at Vukwe left that place because of fever. Some few months after his return in 1908 he died from malaria near Mnene.

But the sacrifices of these pioneers were not made in vain, although the fruits were slow to appear. At the beginning of the First World War five missionaries and eight African helpers had managed to gain a foothold at eight outstations. Just over 100 pupils received instructions in six schools.

In 1915 the first Swedish nurse came to Mnene ten years before Dr. Tilander came. He built Mnene Hospital in an area which was then very much troubled by malaria, bilharzia, and other sicknesses. This hospital is today one of the best in the colony, with a staff of two doctors. There are also a good number of European sisters and African female nurses. Mnene Hospital trains African female nurses.

The medical work has since increased and there are now two hospitals, two big clinics, and three dressing stations.

The various schools have always been effective ways of not only remedying illiteracy and ignorance but also of fighting superstition and cruelty. Primary schools are springing up all over our area. School buildings are also used for church activities and as preaching places on Sundays. The intention is, however, to have more and more proper preaching places, not only at mission stations. The school work has now become more developed and we have, for instance, a Teacher-Training Institution for lower and higher grades.

Other education is given at, for instance, Chegato Secondary School, and Masase Homecraft School. The aim of the Homecraft School is to help women in their homes, and its beneficial influence can be traced in many homes in the African villages.

It has been the aim of the church work to bring the whole population into its sphere, beginning with the children. Sunday schools are held at most places and now involve over 11,800 children. Very often

this work is done by Bible women (Vashandiri) who are interested in helping their church in this, or other kinds of work.

Scouting and the Girl Guide movements have recently been introduced by our church. These movements seem to be very promising, and we hope they will help the work.

So far the church membership has increased every year, over 4,000 catechumens receive Christian instruction every year. They must attend classes for three years before they are baptized. Most of them are between the age of 15-20 years, but there are others who are older. They then go back to their various places and homes as full members of their church.

The task of the church is now to take care of those baptized in the times of great changes in social life in Southern Rhodesia. Great industrial development is taking place very rapidly in urban areas, causing many of our Christians to leave the country life and seek work and settlement in these places.

### CHURCH WORKERS

Church workers include:

- (1) All missionaries including: pastors, doctors, deacons, teachers, and builders, about 60 in all.
- (2) African pastors now 9 in number
- (3) About 80 evangelists
- (4) Schoolteachers
- (5) Sunday school teachers
- (6) Elders
- (7) And Bible Women

As a rule each evangelist is in charge of two outstations. He teaches catechumens twice a week at each of these and conducts Sunday services at each alternately, about twice a month. In addition, he goes about in the surrounding villages visiting both the Christians and the heathen and also conducting prayers where necessary.

The constitution of the African Evangelical Lutheran Church is episcopal. The African ministry is paid entirely from church contributions and even the evangelists are partly paid from the same funds. The ruling body of the church, besides the bishop, is composed of elected representatives from the various church areas.

We have a Bible school where evangelists and other temporary workers of the church are trained. Evangelists have one year of training after Standard V or VI.

All that has been said does not indicate that the work is complete at this stage. On the contrary, so little has been done and so much more remains to be done. Church buildings, schools, and hospitals are still

needed. The spiritual church which we are trying to build in this part of the country is far from being complete. Many factors hinder its progress. The sects take away many of our church members, old heathen practices drag many of our Christians back into heathendom every year. Indifference amongst the people can be seen everywhere. Some Christians turn against the church for one reason or another, and thus make the work started very difficult to continue.

I have mentioned only a few of the hindrances but there are still many more. But still the building is under erection: The foundation is laid, the walls strive upward, and we can easily see that something new has begun to take shape before the eyes of the people in this part of the country.

And therefore this gives us hope and courage to "run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (*Heb. 12: 1b-2a*).

## SOUTH-WEST AFRICA

### A. *THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SOUTH-WEST AFRICA*

JAKOBUS BEUKES

On October 4, 1957 the Rhenish Mission Church was established as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South-West Africa (Rhenish Mission Church). It has been made clear that this was not the founding of a new church, but the establishing of an already existing church in a manner which grants the necessary freedom and right to the indigenous members of the church. The development which led to this step has been slow, if we take into consideration the fact that mission work in South-West Africa was started one hundred years ago. But there are reasons for this which would not be overcome by good will alone. First of all, the tribal wars between the Nama and the Herero must be mentioned. They were a real obstacle to steady progress of mission work. Then the two world wars brought a setback in the development of the work. And, thirdly, it must be said that pastors were able to be ordained for the first time in 1949, although from the beginning church workers have been helping in the congregations but not as ordained ministers. Many of the old evangelists had done a fine work and had a great influence upon the growing church among the Herero, Bergdama, Nama, Ovambo, and Coloureds. Nevertheless, the fact is that only after the ordination of pastors in 1949 were the plans for establishing an indigenous church worked out, which then found their realization on October 4, 1957.

The characteristic features of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South-West Africa can be seen by mentioning some of the difficulties which have arisen since the foundation of the church.

The congregations of the Rhenish mission in South-West Africa were founded by missionaries sent out by a mission society combining the confessions of the Lutheran and the Reformed type. Although most of the missionaries sent out to South-West Africa belonged to the Lutheran type, there has never been an outspoken Lutheran exclusiveness

among them nor among the church members. So long as the mission society had the responsibility for the spiritual guidance of all congregations, it seemed not so necessary to state the character of the whole work. What was definitely clear, was that all congregations without exception used the Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther. The constitution of the church has been based on this fact and after thorough investigation the pastors themselves decided that the name of the church must be "Evangelical Lutheran," based on the Small Catechism and the Augsburg Confession.

It was a surprise to the whole church that opposition arose toward this name. The Coloureds of Rehoboth, a community with special rights received from the government long ago, feared that by this name the identity of the church had been lost and that the missionaries tried to reserve their own rights within the church, especially in regard to property. Many discussions have been held about this and the Church Council, as the present leading body, has again and again declared that the name of the church is the proper note of the confession of the church and that the total independence of the church is the real aim of all missionaries. The second General Synod held from April 4-6, 1960 decided that the name of the church must not be changed and therefore we can hope that the Evangelical Lutheran Church, already known by this name throughout South-West Africa, can develop along the lines fixed by tradition in both doctrine and in church life.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in South-West Africa is a community containing all tribes of South-West Africa in *one* church. Every section of the synod chooses its own representative on the Church Council and therefore this council represents, together with the Praeses and three members of the Missionary Council, the whole church. Co-operation in this council has been excellent, but criticism arose which drew attention to the fact that the differences between the various tribes in the church have not been overcome by the foundation of the *one* church. Again and again differences of language, customs, and traditions disturb the unity of the church. The synod discussed this matter thoroughly and decided that in spite of all difficulties the unity of the church is to be recognized as a gift of the Lord and as a task which reminds us of the last will of our Lord (*John 17:21*): "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou has sent me."

As already mentioned above, the church has an executive body of both pastors and European missionaries. Although the constitution makes provision for the withdrawal of the European missionaries after ten years, the character of the present situation lies in the co-operation between the pastors and the missionaries. We are involved in a gradual

handing-over of leading powers to the pastors. There is a good spirit of co-operation among the two sections. It has proved to be very helpful that also the political and social questions of our country can be discussed by both sides in a spirit of goodwill. Thus it has been possible for the synod to send a message to the government and to all tribal authorities which brings the meaning of God's Word to them, strengthening them in their heavy task of maintaining order, and admonishing them to be mindful of the opinions and welfare of the whole population, especially of the indigenous people.

As a church which has been founded on Jesus Christ, the only foundation of faith, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South-West Africa (Rhenish Mission Church) stands by its name and holds to the Lutheran doctrine. *Sola gratia, sola fide.* The Evangelical Lutheran Church in South-West Africa confesses that the unity of the church members, belonging to different tribes, is given to it as a gift by Christ which must be defended against all enemies within and outside the church. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in South-West Africa has been entrusted with the co-operation of the different races within *one* church. It recognizes its task to confess the real meaning of unity in Christ, preaching with St. Paul (*II Cor. 5:20*): "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

## B. *THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN OVAMBOKAVANGO CHURCH*

LEONARD AUALA

The 100-year-old Finnish Missionary Society began to work in Ovamboland in 1870. The Lutheran Church as an organization exists in Ovamboland since 1925, when the first proper synod was held and the first Ovambo pastors were ordained. Soon thereafter the church extended to the Okavango area, too.

The independent Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church got its constitution in 1956 and new regulations in 1958. According to this constitution, the church is episcopal, but no bishop has been chosen as yet. The church was registered in 1957 and applied in 1959 for membership in LWF.

The number of baptized persons was in 1959, 113,000. The number of ordained pastors is now 54. The Theological Seminary at Elim has

now 17 students. The Ecclesiastical Institute at Engela trains the evangelists and catechists. Almost all the education of the country has been in the hands of the church. The number of the children in all schools exceeds 20,000. The standards of education now approximately correspond to government requirements, and plans are being made by the government to take over the administration of the schools.

The last three years have been very difficult for Ovamboland due to drought and famine. The church has made efforts, in co-operation with the government, to feed children and also sick and old people. The hardship still continues.

Approximately 1,200 patients are daily treated by three Finnish doctors and a number of Finnish and Ovambo sisters and nurses. Onandjokue Hospital has been rebuilt after the great fire of 1958.

A lot of educational and devotional literature has been published by the press at Oniipa. The Holy Bible is being translated into Kwanyama. The British and Foreign Bible Society, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in South-West Africa, and the Anglican Mission are co-operating with us in this work.

The last years have also been a time of harvest for the missionary activity of the church. After eight years of work the first eight persons have been baptized in the immigrant tribes from Angolaland living to the west of the Ovambos. Ten Bushmen, who live between Ovamboland and Okavango, have also been baptized, and the catechism classes are crowded.

For work among diaspora Ovambos in the towns and in the mines, one Finnish and one Ovambo pastor and many evangelists have been sent. The church itself has also taken greater financial responsibility in the area outside Ovamboland. Fellowship with our Lutheran sister church (Rhenish Mission Church) has deepened in this co-operative effort.

The youth activity of the church has also become more effective, especially the work among the boys under 15 years. Many Christians are engaged in voluntary leadership in these youth clubs as well as in the Sunday schools and in Bible study groups.

## THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN TANGANYIKA

RUBEN A. PEDERSEN

Since the last meeting of the All-Africa Lutheran Conference, held at Marangu, Tanganyika, in November 1955, Tanganyika has moved to take its place with other African countries which have lined up outside the door of independence. It is to receive responsible government in September this year, and there is positive indication that independence may follow before the end of next year.

Tanganyika is a land of great contrasts—geographical, cultural, economic, and spiritual. One thinks of the lofty snows of Mt. Kilimanjaro (so near the equator), and the vast Serengeti plains, which resemble a desert much of the time.

Customs and cultures vary amongst the 120 tribes, and the total population numbers at least 9 million. Some of the tribes number over 40,000 people, others less than 1,000. Economically much remains to be done to raise the standard of living of the average citizen. Tremendous differences still abound in the desire for education, medical care, and general "modern-day" advancement. Many who have traveled and witnessed life and progress beyond their own borders are dissatisfied and restless and impatient with the present conditions and progress. Others, who still number in the scores of thousands, are illiterate nomadic or pastoral peoples, who cling tenaciously to the old social customs that knit the numbers of the clan and tribe closely together. Members of a single household can show a striking contrast, some of them wearing "Western" or "European" clothing, others still dressed in skins of animals or draped in a loincloth or blanket.

Industrial development is slowly increasing. Skin and hide (leather) industries, shoe manufacturing, and tobacco processing are recent developments. Pepsi-Cola, Coca-Cola, etc., invaded the territory several years ago! The principal exports now include the following: sisal, tobacco, cotton, coffee, skins, diamonds, gold, and other minerals. More and more people will leave the bush and plains areas as industrialization increases (yet, some 90 per cent of the people must still gain their livelihood from

the soil). And in this time of rapid social (and political) change, the churches must be keenly alert and aware of what is taking place, or they will lose their opportunity to be "light" and "salt" in this vast country!

Lutheran missionary effort in Tanganyika dates back to the 1880's, and for the first forty years was carried on mainly by the Berlin, Bethel, and Leipzig Societies.

In the 1920's other Lutheran societies began work in the territory, and at the time of the two world wars, some of these groups were asked to shepherd the fields made "orphan" by the sudden repatriation of missionaries from Germany.

During the past fifteen years there has evolved an international team in the major Lutheran areas in Tanganyika. No less than thirteen societies contribute personnel and means to the co-operative Lutheran effort.

Perhaps the most recent important forward step in devolution and partnership, for the entire Lutheran household in Tanganyika, was taken last year when the Lutheran Missions Council ceased and turned over its work to the Federation of Lutheran Churches of Tanganyika. The Federation, newly constituted, began to acquaint itself with the responsibilities and opportunities in the program of its joint institutions, i.e., Secondary School, Theological College, Medical Assistants' Training Center, and the printing and distribution of Christian literature. It has organized a Board of Youth Activities, committee on Sunday school work, Board of Evangelism and Stewardship, committee on Theology, and set up responsible boards for the various institutions. It has engaged a national in full-time literature work, and hopes to have a full-time Executive Secretary by the end of this year.

An official educational policy was adopted and uniform terms of service for registered teachers approved. Similar steps are being taken in the area of medical services.

A Lutheran pastor from India was called the end of last year, and began work among the Asian groups in the capital city of Dar es Salaam (where they number some 40,000), and other important centers. He is supported by the Lutheran World Federation, the Federation of Lutheran Churches in India, and the Federation in Tanganyika.

Another missionary, who is now taking further special studies in Islamics, will next year return to serve the churches of the Federation in the long-neglected sphere of an enlightened evangelistic approach to the Muslims, who number some one and a half million in Tanganyika.

It is also hoped that an experienced leader in stewardship will spend several months in conference with indigenous leaders on a concentrated study of the stewardship life and potential of the churches.

The Lutheran Theological College at Makumira has expanded its courses of study to five years, including a full-year of practical parish

work between the third and fifth year. With an annual intake of twenty-five students, it will have a student body of some 100. It has also been selected by the Association of East African Theological Colleges, as the Tanganyika Center which will offer the "diploma" course of theological studies, beginning in 1962. It will receive students from the Moravian churches for this course, which will operate parallel to the regular course. An interdenominational (Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican) Theological College in Kenya, and an Anglican Theological College in Uganda, have been chosen as the other two East African centers to offer the diploma course.

The B.D. course in theological studies will, in all probability, be offered at the Makerere University College of East Africa soon.

It has been the privilege of Tanganyika to be host country to the LWF-sponsored All-Africa Theological Seminar. Located at Marangu, where the first All-Africa Lutheran Conference was held five years ago, it will complete its two-year course toward the end of this year.

Numerically the Lutherans are the largest Protestant group in Tanganyika. The following are the approximate baptized memberships of the member churches of the Federation:

1. Lutheran Church of Northern Tanganyika	140,000
2. Evangelical Church of North Western Tanganyika	55,000
3. Lutheran Church of Southern Tanganyika	75,000
4. Lutheran Church of Usambara-Digo	31,000
5. Lutheran Church of Central Tanganyika	22,000
6. Lutheran Church of Uzaramo	4,000
7. Lutheran Church of Mbulu	2,000

Three of the above are members of the Lutheran World Federation, and the Tanganyika Federation will serve as the National Committee of the LWF in this territory.

At its recent meeting the Federation unanimously voted to set up a committee to lay initial plans for the establishment of one Lutheran Church in Tanganyika. This will involve a number of important changes in present mission board-indigenous church relationships.

Moving outside the Lutheran household we stand at once in the fellowship with others in the Christian Council of Tanganyika, representing the main Protestant groups of some 700,000 adherents. Co-operative effort in its program include the area of education, the area of Christian literature, and the area of youth and Sunday school activity, where it was decided that the All-Africa Sunday School materials be translated and used throughout the territory, eliminating a costly duplication of effort.

What of the days ahead? It remains for the church to understand its full responsibility in this country, and with confidence in the Holy Spirit, to take bold steps of faith in its own household and its outreach to others.

## THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN ASIA

GORIKAPUDI DEVASAHAYAM

In presenting the trends in the Lutheran churches in Asia, which has its being among more than half of the world's population, one will be driven to say with the Lord that indeed, "the harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (*Matt. 9:37, 38*).

The countries in Asia, on the one hand, are proud of their own religions, literature, and culture, tracing them back to centuries before Christ. On the other hand, they are touched by the secular materialist culture of the West, with its disdain of religion as a cultural burden of the unscientific past. As such they consider the Christian faith as something foreign and unnecessary. Some identify Christianity with Western colonialism. In fact, one of India's national leaders remarked that the church in India is a foreign pocket. Thus the churches in Asia live and witness against strong winds. Yet there are instances, too, of national leaders praising Christian missions, and the welfare and educational work of the church is in high esteem.

The situations in the different countries of Asia vary tremendously, and it is difficult to generalize in any way. In China our churches have no relations today with churches abroad. They are trying to learn to live as Christians in a Communist state. We know little about what goes on and can only ask your prayers that the church in China may be strong and faithful in its witness. Among Chinese outside mainland China the work has been growing more rapidly than ever before among Chinese people. In Taiwan and Hong Kong there are new churches born and grown since 1950 whose members are now thousands in number. They have been admitted to membership in the Lutheran World Federation. In Malaya the work has gone more slowly.

In Japan, the most industrialized, yet in some ways the most conservative of Asian countries, our Lutheran Church, like others, has made more progress in the postwar years than in all the years before the last war. Yet there is only one Christian among every two hundred Japanese.

The Batak Church in Sumatra is the largest Protestant church body

in Asia. Political unrest in Indonesia has affected the work of the church, but it is continuing to grow.

New Guinea is not properly Asian in character. The people of that island are coming right out of the most primitive society, and even now some are still headhunters. Our church there grew by 20,000 members last year. One difficulty of the work is that on an island with half the population of Madagascar there are more than 500 languages spoken —120 in the area where the Lutheran Church works.

The churches of India—where Lutheran church work began 250 years ago—are growing slowly, although there has been difficulty in obtaining visas for new missionaries and Christian children are in some cases deprived of school assistance given to non-Christians. Evangelistic bands have been organized under Indian leadership. Special effort is made by some churches to reach high caste Hindus and Moslems.

Lutheran membership in the Asian area is given as follows:

China	53,000	New Guinea	209,824
Hong Kong	22,890	Pakistan	2,234
Indonesia	717,398	Philippines	3,281
India	622,554	Taiwan	6,457
Japan	16,120	Jordan	1,374
Malaya	320		

Asian Lutheran churches are concerned for the need of closer co-operation with other churches in order to carry out a more effective witness. In most countries they are active in Christian councils. In South India Lutheran churches are engaged in union discussions with the Church of South India. Pulpit exchange is being practiced after a joint theological commission came to agreement in doctrinal discussions. Altar fellowship is under consideration.

An experimental project in joint theological education is also being planned. Lutherans, the Church of South India, and Baptists have worked out plans for using one institution, with separate residence halls for each group of students. The plans are now being considered by the concerned churches and missions. In Sumatra Methodist students attend the theological seminary of the Batak Church, and a Methodist teacher is on the faculty.

The problem of self-support is being tackled by many of the churches in Asia, who have hitherto been largely dependent on mission aid. Stewardship education is an important matter. Assistance from abroad is being diminished gradually.

In some cases this means the cutting down of the staff of paid workers. Emphasis is therefore being given to the training and use of voluntary workers to assist the pastors. Short courses are given in some cases. In others Bible schools for lay workers are doing the job.

Christians are active in matters concerning the economic life of their people. In India the churches try to help in government projects. In Jordan, Hong Kong and India Lutheran churches co-operate in the refugee relief program of the Lutheran World Federation. In New Guinea the mission has sponsored the establishment of a trading company whose aim is to help develop the economy of the people. It markets the products of the people, mainly coffee and copra, and supplies imported goods for the local market. Meanwhile it educates the Christian people in business and modern economic methods. There are a number of agricultural projects and industrial schools in our churches.

Meanwhile the churches are not unaware of their missionary obligation. Older New Guinean congregations send hundreds of their members to begin work in distant mountain villages. The Batak Church has for many years had a mission field on a neighboring island. In India the Lutherans together support five workers in an area where Europeans cannot go. They also contribute to the support of an India missionary working in Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika.

The dire need of the church in Asia is a real spiritual revival, dedicated leaders and an army of voluntary workers who have committed themselves to the Lord of the Harvest.

## THE WORK OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY IN AFRICA

FRANCIS J. BEDFORD

It has been said that the fact of Bible translation mirrors the growth of the church in Africa. One always feels that, with certain exceptions, the maturity of the church in any area is marked by the publication of the complete Bible. The completion of a Gospel portion seems to mark the period of pioneer evangelism, the completion of a New Testament means that the church has taken root, while the publication of the whole Bible testifies to a deeper spiritual life and a desire to propagate the gospel.

It is a challenging fact that out of 294 different languages, projects now being superintended by the Translations Department of the British and Foreign Bible Society, 153 are in the languages of Africa.

In Africa today there are no less than 34 new complete Bibles being prepared, and the New Testament is being translated into 20 new languages.

The history of every one of these versions is the history of the forward march of the Christian Church, and in all this the Bible Society marches forward at the request of the church, not dictating policy but seeking to satisfy the direct wishes of the church for the Word of God in the language of the people. It has been the rule of the society in Africa as elsewhere to take the fullest and most responsible opinion of the church, before embarking upon any new venture.

The mass of translation is going on as a quietly constructive task in Africa at a time of tremendous change, and in the heat of a rising nationalism more and more African translators are bound to arise as the standard of theological training improves. Many will have served their apprenticeship on the committees which already exist.

It would be a splendid thing if some of the best could receive some special training for the task which lies ahead. May we suggest that the churches represented at this conference should set aside some of their best men for Bible translation and revision. Only the best men are good enough for this great basic task of the church—the provision of the

Bible in the language of the people—the greatest single factor in the growth and stability of the church.

Most of the Bibles of Africa are sold at less than half price, which ensures that they reach people who cannot afford more. We sell our Bibles cheaply, but in order to do this we rely upon the gifts of people everywhere to help us. A very large amount of money is needed, but up to the present this work has only been made possible by the sacrificial gifts of devoted Christian people. Often these gifts have come from very poor people who love the Bible so much that they want to put it into the hands of men everywhere.

We thank God that the church in Africa is beginning to face up to its responsibility in this matter. For example, the Lutheran Church of Northern Tanganyika each year sends to the Bible Society the gifts given throughout the church on one Sunday of the church's year.

May I make an appeal to the churches here represented to consider the holding of a regular Bible Sunday each year, when all churches can send in their special gifts to be used for spreading God's Word throughout Africa.

This is the task of all Christians everywhere, and it can only be carried out if we all co-operate in a great effort. It is not the amount of money which is sent that matters, but the spirit of love and generosity with which it is contributed. We must educate our people in this matter and once they understand they will give to the limit of their power.

Are you thoroughly satisfied in your churches that the Scriptures are reaching all the people who need them? Do you constantly review this matter, not only for the wide rural areas but for the growing cities of Africa? I could give you many statistics which would show that the Christian Church in Africa is not facing up realistically to the distribution of God's Word. We must experiment boldly with every method of distribution.

*In conclusion* may I quote some great words: "For literally millions of people their first and often their only chance to come face to face with Christ is when they face him in the pages of a Gospel or the Testament."

For all who take the first steps of faith, for all who have long known their Lord, this book is an indispensable Book. By it their faith is kept warm and glowing. By it their conduct as Christians is guided.

You cannot create and maintain the believing man without it; you cannot create the church without it; you cannot reach without it the great unhappy starving multitudes of the world for the redemption of their life. The Bible must be in their hands.

## LITERATURE IN AFRICA

WESLEY SADLER

The spoken word and the printed word are a strong combination. The first provides a personal contact, enabling the listener to see the speaker's zeal and love for Christ. But it is not enough. It has never been enough; it never will be.

Before a young African became a Christian, he said: "I heard the Word of God many times. I understood some of it, I believed some of it, and I forgot a lot of it. But now that I have God's Word in my own language, I can read it for myself. I can return to it to add to my understanding. I believe it. I want to become a Christian."

Someone said that a Christian is the Scriptures in action. Christian literature is also the Scriptures in action. And both the Scriptures and the literature on which it is based can be at work in many thousands of places at one time. And not only Christian literature, but literature concerning child care, the care of the body, community development; educational literature; literature introducing the African to people of other countries.

Literature in the church, the community, and the nation can relate the old to the new and lead to a more enlightened future. It can strengthen the church and help it to become a part of the community, the community to become a part of the nation, the nation to take its part in the family of nations.

Literature can do that—good literature, that is. But why are there not enough good books? I shall give you several reasons.

1. As one printer-publisher said, "Too many books unsold and still on the shelves, are concerned with what outsiders think the African *should* have."

2. For the most part, publishers and foreign writers and some African writers do not know what their readers *want* to read. How many churches, missions, or governments have made a thorough search into the reading habits of their people to determine what they want to read and how much time they give to it? We cannot spend our money and the time of our talented writers in producing only what the African

wants to read, but once we discover what he wants, we can couple it with what will profit him.

3. Too much literature for Africans has been written by Europeans who did not take into consideration the language pattern and the culture of the people for whom they were writing. Not long ago I worked with a group of African translators. Some of them were well educated, some fairly so. They were translating from English into their vernaculars—Christian literature that was written well, written beautifully, in some cases. Most of the writers were foreigners; most had spent several years in Africa. But much of what they had written was not readily translatable into African languages, and few of the illustrations used were related to African life. Where is the fault? The writer did not know the scope, depth, and pattern of the African language of the people for whom he was writing.

4. Too much literature on sale in Africa for Africans was not written for Africans in the first place. It was written for people in America, England, and elsewhere. On the night before I left to come here I was reading a book that I purchased in an African bookstore. It was well written. It was interesting. But it was written for a foreign public.

On the other hand, I have read a great amount of literature written by Africans in the one African language that I speak and read and write. Some of it was good, some bad. I fear, however, that some that I labeled bad or did not understand was due to my own ignorance. More than once I was given something to read, written by an African, that made my African neighbors of that language chuckle or exclaim over because of its excellent quality. Though I understood every word, phrase, clause, and sentence in the manuscript, I found nothing funny in it or nothing to praise. The fault was mine. I simply was not up to the subtleties or sufficiently immersed in its culture to appreciate it.

Too much literature, written abroad for people abroad and not for Africans, is in the same category. Often Africans cannot understand it and, failing to understand, they do not appreciate it.

The substitute for foreign literature is simply this: the production of literature written especially for Africans. I have found it difficult to win converts to that decision, but I keep trying. I believe in it with all my heart.

5. There are too many Africans who cannot read. I do not remember the exact figures given for illiteracy in Africa, but it is high, as high as the tall buildings in New York City. This much is certain, however: There are millions and millions of African adults who cannot read their own language or any other language. They are potential book buyers,

they comprise a vast army that, given the opportunity to learn to read, will help to buy the good books off the shelves. For the illiterate adults *can* learn to read. Under a good program they can learn to read anything in their own language within three months. Why the church has failed to bring these people into the wonderful world of literacy, I cannot understand.

6. Not all literature in the vernaculars has been written properly, for the simple, but devastating result that many vernaculars have not been properly reduced to writing. In October of last year I was working with an African who wanted to become a writer. He was a good man and he worked hard and well. He was making progress. One day I asked him to speak some of his language to me. I wanted to listen to its vowels and other features. I discovered that his language had seven vowels, but that only five were used in writing. His language was tonal, but tone marks were not employed in literature.

What about man, keen to write for his people? How far was he going to get with the written word when the leaders before him and over him had not properly and completely reduced his language to written form?

7. Not enough people writing today have the ability to write. Add to that the fact that some publishers, maybe many, do not know that their writers cannot write.

8. Distribution is expensive. A man in Kenya told me that his organization had to store their bookvan, as they did not have enough money to run it. That is a familiar story. Bookvans, though an excellent means of distribution, are expensive to operate. Several years ago a government man in Ghana said that when they did not use their vans, book sales trickled in. But when the vans went out, sales amounted to the thousands. They used their vans, by the way. They had enough money in their budget to do so.

9. There is not enough planning done by literature committees. Many leaders in that field of church or mission or government endeavor do not know what manuscripts they will produce or call for three months hence. Their literature programs lack roundness, completeness, thoroughness.

10. I have saved the tenth reason for last. It should be first. It is placed here for emphasis. This is it: *There are not enough African writers.* I should like to wake up tomorrow and find one thousand additional African writers, each seated at his writing table, pouring out thousands of words for African readers. *For there is no question that the best literature for Africans will be written by Africans trained in Africa.*

Who knows the African better than the African? The answer is too simple, too evident. Africans want to write. Africans by the hundreds want to reach their people for good through the written word.

Africans can write—some of them, that is. They have the potential in great quantities and quality, but they need training, a lot of it. They are eager to develop skill in writing, and a great many succeed in doing so. Africans and foreigners welcome them to this field of Christian work.

Africa is a wonderful place to work in. For Africa is growing, moving upward, moving fast. The most notable sign of this is the increasing number of independent African states. But there are other signs. One of them is made evident by African writers. They are criticizing themselves. They are not so engulfed in growing pains that they cannot see their faults, and African writers are bringing them to the fore.

There is no one answer to solve the literature problem of Africa. Ten answers are needed, maybe more. But the number one answer is more African writers, for the best literature for Africans will be written by Africans trained in Africa.

## THE LWF AND THE CHURCHES OF AFRICA

ARNE SOVIK

The term "ecumenical movement" is a familiar one. Yet a definition may be in order. The word comes from the Greek. It is used to denote that movement in the church which emphasizes its oneness and attempts to foster practical co-operation and theological unity among the many traditions and organizations which make up organized Christendom.

Many factors have combined to make this generation particularly conscious of the church's disunity and the need for unity. Let me mention only two: One is the fact that people travel more widely and easily. There is more contact among churches than ever before and therefore both more tension and more sense of a need for co-operation. The other is the missionary movement. As Christians have met in countries where we are a missionary minority we have realized how important is the faith that binds us together compared to the differences that keep us apart. We have also realized that in evangelizing the non-Christian world we must work together.

So the ecumenical movement has grown.

Others are going to tell you about one aspect of that movement—the interdenominational organizations. I want to say something about another kind of ecumenical development, the confessional groups—particularly about the one we are related to, the Lutheran World Federation.

The LWF is not the oldest of the "confessional" organizations. In its present form it is only 13 years old. But it is perhaps the most active of them, and it includes the largest number of Christians statistically, about fifty million.

What is the LWF? It is not a head office for all Lutherans. It is not a world Lutheran church. It is not an organization above the churches around the world that tells them what to do and say. It is a grouping of about 60 Lutheran churches in some 30 countries who want to do some things together and want to come to understand each other and their work better. It does only what its member churches ask it to do. It grew out of the need of Lutherans to help each other especially during

and after the two world wars. As the years have gone by its work has increased and broadened.

How does it work? Every five years or so the member churches send delegates to an Assembly. (The last one was in Minneapolis in 1957.) These delegates discuss things for ten days or so, as we are doing here, and decide in general on the policy, objectives, and projects to be taken up. Then they elect officers, an executive committee, and several commissions to guide different parts of the work. A secretariat is also appointed.

The work is then carried on by the small committees and commissions and by the staff and by many people who contribute time and work. The cost is taken care of by contributions from member churches and from others who want us to do work for them. Some give for general uses and some for special projects. The headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland, where we are in the same group of buildings as the World Council of Churches.

What does the LWF do for African churches? Let me answer that by describing some of the work of our various departments:

One department has its office in New York and is busy only with the Lutheran churches in Latin America.

Another unit is the News Bureau. Its job is to see that Lutherans hear about what other Lutherans are doing and that the world hears about the Lutheran churches' work. Part of proclaiming the gospel is to let the world know about the church, through which the gospel comes and which is indeed part of the gospel. Through our news service people learn about the church in Africa. Our English news editor is here to see that the world hears about this meeting.

The Department of Theology has another job. I think that perhaps within each of your churches there are theological disagreements, for each Christian's understanding of the Scriptures is influenced by his own experience. Each has something to offer. This is true also among churches and nationalities. The work of the Theology Department is to help in two ways: First, by the study of theological problems that bother us all; second, by bringing about an international exchange of thinking. At least one of you here has studied in America on a scholarship that was given to help pastors from one country learn what other Lutherans have to say. The department also sends teachers and lecturers from one country to another.

The Department of World Service is, so far as Africa goes, concerned about two problems: migration and emergency relief. The LWF is concerned to see that Lutherans who come from one part of the world to another are not lost to the church. In South Africa it is helping the churches to establish new congregations to serve European immigrants.

We are also concerned about our Christian obligation to those in special need, whether they are Christian or not. Most of our effort goes to help feed, clothe, and heal the hundreds of thousands of refugees in the Middle East, Hong Kong, and India. But the World Service Department has also helped in time of flood and famine and disaster in Africa, and will be ready to do it again as resources permit.

The Department of World Mission is particularly concerned with Asia and this continent. In spite of the name, this department is not primarily concerned with mission societies. Like the missions themselves, we work for the growth of the church in Africa and Asia, and our job is to help in the proclamation of God's Word.

Some things churches and missions can do best alone. Our job is to help where a joint effort is needed. For example, in an international conference like this, where all African Lutherans try to think together; or in a radio station, about which Dr. Aske will report; or in finding scholarships for students, where we can sometimes help with both money and arrangements. When some church is in special need we can sometimes give financial help, because our churches and mission agencies have given us certain funds to use.

The Commission on World Mission tells the department what to do at its annual meeting. But in reality it is more than the six members of the commission who decide. To each annual meeting we invite a large group of people representing the missions and churches of Europe, America, Asia, and Africa. The meeting becomes a consultation among Lutherans engaged in the Christian mission in Africa and Asia. It has been very useful to the work of all, because it helps us all to think together. Our work is to serve all who were engaged in this work.

To report specifically on what the Commission and Department of World Mission have been doing in the five last years would be impossible here. In conclusion, however, I must report upon the requests made at Marangu. First, this conference has been authorized and prepared in response to a Marangu resolution. Second, we have, to the best of our ability, fulfilled the request of Marangu that materials on the question of the episcopacy be furnished to those requesting such materials. Thirdly, in partial fulfillment of the request of Marangu that higher theological education be offered on African soil, the All-Africa Lutheran Theological Seminar was authorized and will soon conclude a two-year term during which 18 pastors from 6 countries will have studied there. A full report on this project will be given after its conclusion, and decisions will then be made regarding further steps.

The LWF has so far a very limited membership among African churches. But the number is growing. We want to continue to serve you all and above all the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## THE ALL-AFRICA CHURCH CONFERENCE

FRIDTJOV BIRKELI

The first All-Africa Church Conference was held in January 1958 in Ibadan, Nigeria. It is historically correct to say that the coming together of this conference was directly inspired by the first All-Africa Lutheran Conference at Marangu, Tanganyika, November 1955. In the spring of 1956 a suggestion was sent from the Department of World Mission in Geneva to the International Missionary Council in London that the first regular General Assembly of that body to be held in Africa be enlarged to include an All-Africa Protestant gathering, to which every Protestant church in Africa should be invited. The IMC decided to carry out its original plan of holding the General Assembly of the IMC in Ghana, but at the same time encouraged the Christian Councils of Africa to send out invitations to hold an All-Africa Church Conference in a neighboring country, immediately following the General Assembly. A number of Christian Councils in Africa gave their wholehearted support to the idea and the conference took place in Ibadan in January 1958, with the Christian Council of Nigeria as host and Sir Francis Ibiam, an African medical doctor of that country, in the chair.

The conference was a great experience and gave to all present a vision of Christian fellowship all over the African continent. In order to carry out the good proposals that came out of the meeting, a Continuation Committee was elected. Its aim was to look upon the whole of Africa as an entity that might have its own regional setup, different from and independent of those in other continents. Two different schools of thought have here been at work. The one felt that an organization for Africa with headquarters in Africa and with an African secretary, should nevertheless be as closely linked up with the IMC and the WCC as possible. The Secretary of the Continuation Committee, Dr. Donald M'Timkulu of South Africa, was therefore invited to Europe and America to acquaint himself with what was going on in ecumenical circles all over the world. The other school of thought felt that this African organization ought to be completely independent of all the existing ecumenical

bodies and concentrate on trying to get all the Protestant churches and missions in Africa together in some sort of co-operation locally. Since a very considerable portion of Christian mission work in Africa is carried out by groups that so far have accepted neither the IMC nor the WCC, a local coming together in Africa completely independent of the different world bodies would—at least for the time being—have certain advantages.

The Continuation Committee, with its secretary, is busy with a number of projects. The committee, as well as the All-Africa Church Conference, of course, has no right whatever to interfere in the internal matters of any country, church, or mission. It should, first of all, serve the common cause of Christianity in Africa. And then it is obvious that its main concern must be the immense unfinished task ahead of us: How the vast majority of non-Christian Africans can be approached in order that they may meet Christ. Organizational matters should never be allowed to obscure our genuine missionary task which today is as great as ever here in Africa as well as in other continents. The already established churches can only be regarded as tools in God's hands to reach those whom we have not as yet been able to reach. The All-Africa Church Conference will also serve that cause by raising the question as to how this could best be done, taking into steadily renewed consideration the special conditions under which we are laboring here in Africa.

THE INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY  
COUNCIL  
and  
THE WORLD COUNCIL OF  
CHURCHES  
and  
THE AFRICAN CHURCHES

CHRISTIAN BAETA

I have just come away from Scotland where, on the 14th of August, at St. Giles Cathedral in the City of Edinburgh, Scotland, a great service of thanksgiving and praise to God was held. It was attended by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. J. H. Oldham, Dr. Franklin Clark Fry (the President of your own Lutheran World Federation), and hundreds of other church dignitaries and representatives from all over the world. The great procession into the church was a most colorful affair, with all sorts of ecclesiastical vestments and academic robes in evidence. When, to the peal of the organ and a fanfare of trumpets, the great hymn "All people that on earth do dwell" was intoned, all hearts were thrilled and uplifted.

Now what was it all about? It was to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the great Missionary Conference held at the same place in 1910. Dr. Oldham, who was secretary of that famous conference, was able to be with us and, despite his great age, read the lesson in clear, ringing tones. This conference has been described as "one of the most creative events in the long history of the Christian Church."

At that time a great need was being felt for the various Christian missionary societies at work all over the non-Christian world to show a greater measure of Christian spirit toward one another where they worked, and to co-operate with one another. Two dominant notes went through the entire conference proceedings: firstly, the urgent necessity to carry forward the unfinished task of evangelism, a concern which was

put in a nutshell by the famous slogan coined by the president of the conference, Dr. John R. Mott, "the evangelization of the whole world in our generation"; and secondly, co-operation in doing this. The conference particularly applauded the statements that a well-considered plan of co-operation would be more than equivalent to doubling the missionary staff then available, and that a permanent representative international committee would be set up as a result of the conference.

In fact, the only resolution adopted was for the establishment of a Continuation Committee to carry on the work which the conference had begun. In due course (1921) the International Missionary Council was constituted, and it in turn proceeded to establish territorial or National Christian Councils. It would take much too long to attempt to give a skeleton account of the activities of the IMC. Some of the most important were the arrangements for missions orphaned through the Second World War to be cared for; giving stimulus to new thinking regarding missions, e.g., the Whitby concept of "Partnership in Obedience"; various study projects, particularly that on the training of the ministry, which has now resulted in the operations of the Theological Education Fund; various projects of aid to the younger churches and missionary societies in coping with specific problems, e.g., home and family life, Islam in Africa, World Christian Books; and last but not least, as far as we in Africa are concerned, the sponsoring of the first All-Africa Church Conference.

Already at the Edinburgh Conference it was felt very strongly that co-operation only was not enough. "More than one expressed the hope that the day might come when they could meet to face those very issues of doctrine which had been ruled out at Edinburgh, 'Seeking the guidance of the Spirit of Christ to lead us into the larger and fuller truth which comprehends the different opinions.'" Two parallel movements, Life and Work, and Faith and Order, starting in the middle 1920's, eventually culminated in the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948; and, all being well, the two life-giving streams of the Ecumenical Movement, both springing up from Edinburgh in 1910, will reunite again when the IMC and the WCC become integrated into one body next year at New Delhi.

Partly in view of this development, the need was felt at the first All-Africa Church Conference held at Ibadan, for an organization within the framework of which specifically African problems and concerns may be studied and dealt with by those most competent to do so. In any case, it had become highly desirable to devise some means of getting African Christian leaders from the various parts of the continent to meet and have contacts, and take counsel with one another. Furthermore, bearing in mind that the leadership of some sections of Christian work in Africa

would have nothing to do with the Ecumenical Movement, it seemed wise to create a body with which all can co-operate without giving up any positions taken. It is hoped that the All-Africa Church Conference will develop a genuinely African leadership, which will be obvious to all as such. At the present historical juncture it is rather important that the Christian movement among Africans shall be plainly seen to be planned and directed by truly free agents who, as Africans, fully share the fate of their fellow Africans.

## RADIO EVANGELISM FOR THE UNCOMMITTED CONTINENT

SIGURD ASKE

The central task of the Christian Church is communication. The proclamation of the gospel belongs to the *esse* of the church. Without missions the church ceases to be a church and degenerates into some kind of a social club or fraternal society.

This undeniable fact does not, however, automatically justify the use of radio as a means of evangelism. In fact, right now a number of learned theologians are engaged in a debate whether the gospel can be preached over the radio. Radio does not provide the personal contact between the speaker and the audience. Some draw from this the conclusion that the gospel cannot be communicated via a radio microphone.

There is a basic theological problem involved. However, I shall sidestep this for a moment. First I want to say a word about the mechanical effectiveness of radio.

When the President of the United States a few years ago went to the microphone to speak to the American people on the race problem in Little Rock, it was estimated that he spoke to 70 million people. Suppose the President had decided that radio could not carry his message, and instead had chosen to use conventional means to communicate his message. How often would he have had to speak and to what size of audiences? To audiences of an average of 1,200 he would have had to speak once a day every weekday, five times on Sundays, and then keep this up for 96 years!

The Christian Church, with the Great Commission on her shoulders and therefore regarding the world as her parish, simply must by necessity make use of radio. This is true in general. It is even more obvious in Africa in 1960.

The politicians understand this. During the initial stage of the present upheaval in the Congo, a Congo delegation arrived somewhere in Europe. A contract for a 100 kilowatt transmitter was signed in a day, the blueprints for the radio station buildings were drawn up over night. The next day airplanes were chartered and the whole works flown out

to the Congo, where in the meantime cement was being poured for the foundations. Within four weeks the station was scheduled to be broadcasting. I am not recommending such haste, but these politicians put the Christian Church to shame. Does "the King's business" get the priority it deserves?

Almost anywhere in Africa today you can pick up the Voice of Moscow, the Voice of America, or the Voice of Cairo. Shall we not also find a way to broadcast the Voice of the Gospel? The Voice of Peking or Moscow may give people something to live for. But only the Voice of the Gospel can enable us to face not only the problems of life but also the dread of death—with peace and hope.

I do not pretend to know Africa. And I suppose Africa is so vast and so heterogenous and changing so rapidly that anyone who claims he knows Africa merely proves that he does not.

Until I made an All-Africa tour last year, I had but a vague idea of the immensity of this continent. I blame it on the textbook atlases we used in school when I was a little boy. Norway was big—tremendously large. But Africa was small. A "pocket edition" continent!

What an immense continent Africa is! Upon the territory of Africa you can superimpose the whole of Europe ( $3\frac{3}{4}$  million square miles), the United States of America (3 million square miles), plus India's  $1\frac{3}{4}$  million square miles, and China's  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million square miles and still have ample space for smaller countries in between and around the edges!

I spoke of superimposing something upon the territory of Africa. That time is, of course, gone forever, never to return. The only way in which Africa may be approached today is in a spirit of unselfish partnership. For Africa is committed to freedom and independence. That street is a one-way street. People who ignore such freshly painted traffic signs will inevitably end up in a blind alley from which there is no honorable exit.

On the statue erected in honor of Kwame Nkrumah in Accra, Ghana, these words are written:

Seek first the Political Kingdom  
and all things shall be added unto you!

I read two things out of this inscription. Not blasphemy, because I am sure no such thing was intended. But rather that (1) politically an absolute commitment is expressed; and that (2) these words are a testimony to the fact that many of the national leaders of Africa have been in contact with the Christian message even to the extent that a biblical formulation of a political slogan feels natural and proper. Unfortunately it may perhaps also be said of many of these leaders that their religious conviction does not match their nationalistic zeal either in clarity or fervor. Africa is committed politically, but uncommitted religiously.

Of the continent's 240 million people, 86 million are considered Mohammedan, 35 million Christian, 75 million are associated with primitive religion. The rest—45 million—are labeled "no religion." If the developments continue as hitherto (as they no doubt will, only at accelerated speed) the 75 million will—by the impact of technology and materialism—be forced into a religious no-man's-land to join the other 45 million already there, which means that over the next few decades roughly speaking one-half of Africa's population will have to face a decision in life's most important question: the question of religion.

Redrawing the picture in broad colors: three spiritual giants are today locked in a life-and-death struggle on the African battlefield. In a show-down battle for the soul and future of African Islam, communism and Christianity are fighting it out in the towns and villages. Unless the old-fashioned pagans are reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ, a new generation of modernized pagans will populate the continent. This is indeed a burning issue:

*How can the Christian Church reach the millions of Africa with the good tidings?*

One obvious answer is via radio. There are, of course, still a handful of Christian skeptics who pessimistically point out that there are probably no more than 5 million radio receivers in Africa: one receiver for every 50 people. From these figures they draw the hasty conclusion that the Lutheran World Federation is 30 years too early in establishing a radio station in Ethiopia. They overlook several important factors:

1. Since radio has only recently invaded many parts of Africa, its importance is also correspondingly greater. (The first time you see a jet airliner it makes a much deeper impression on you than when you after a while get sick and tired of all the noise it makes.)

2. The number of radios in Africa is increasing at an incredible rate. Ghana, in 1959, imported 60,000 receivers. For 1960 the figure is 120,000. In a certain area in Tanganyika the number of radios rose 400 per cent within three years. In one of the new nations in West Africa the government—in an effort to establish effective means of communication—has worked out plans to distribute free of charge 1 million receivers over a 4-year period, beginning with 1960.

3. Until illiteracy has been overcome, radio provides just about the only, and certainly the most effective, means of reaching people who cannot read. (Television will be even more effective.)

4. The Africans seem to know how to put their radios in more strategic places than we Europeans. We put many of our radios in the privacy of the bedroom or the kitchen. In Africa you find the radios where the people are: in shops, on the street corners.

5. The most ideal time to establish a radio station is while there are still only a few radios in the target areas, before listening habits have been firmly established.

What about the theological problem, which we sidestepped some time ago? Can the gospel be preached over the radio?

The gospel in its fullness has been revealed to us in Jesus Christ. But anyone who ever attempted to proclaim this gospel will from painful experience know how limited we are in communicating the gospel. How much of the richness and power of the gospel are lost by the handling of it by earthen vessels.

Thus this problem is not something peculiar to radio. It is true that since there is no visible personal contact, it is more difficult. The idea that over the radio you speak to great masses of people is, however, somewhat of a distortion. Most of the people listening to your radio speech will do so either alone or in smaller groups.

There are, of course, people who believe that since Jesus once upon a time made his entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, it is more biblical to introduce Christianity to African communities in a similar way.

A method is not necessarily good just because it is old-fashioned. Through the medium of radio we will provide our Lord and Saviour with a vehicle by which he can make a swift and effective entry into African towns and villages. Radio knows no geographical or political boundaries. No passport formalities slow down the message. A short-wave radio broadcast goes around the world  $7\frac{1}{2}$  times a second! No social inhibitions or race discriminations hinder house visitation. Quietly and gently the message enters in behind closed doors and drawn curtains.

A number of individuals could be mentioned in connection with the Lutheran World Federation radio project. However, since hardly any of them did more than God expected of them, perhaps not even that, I have no bad conscience in naming none.

The proposal to establish and operate a Christian radio station came from the Department of World Mission and was accepted at the commission meeting in Sigtuna, Sweden, in 1958.

A very important question facing us after the Lutheran World Federation Executive Committee had given the green light to go ahead in 1958 was where to put the station. There was never any doubt but that the station should be in Africa. Of the 25 or 26 Protestant radio stations in the world (there is about an equal number of Roman Catholic stations) only one is found in Africa (Monrovia, Liberia). But where in Africa?

First there was the geographical consideration. Since most of our large Lutheran churches are found along the east coast, it should prefer-

ably be toward the east. This was all the more important, since the purpose of the station was "radio evangelism for Africa and Asia."

There was also the political consideration. We were agreed that the Lutheran radio station should not be put in a colonial setup. We wanted to be in a free and independent nation. This limited us, on the east coast, pretty much to Ethiopia.

The concluding reason why in all of Africa, Ethiopia was chosen, was this: that outside Liberia in the west, no other nation in Africa would, to our knowledge, consider granting a franchise to a Christian organization.

Looking back on the decision to apply for a license in Ethiopia, one can see God's guiding hand in this move. From Ethiopia we are close to the Near East Arab world and close to large areas of Asia.

Several years ago a professional survey was undertaken to determine the best sites for Christian radio stations around the world. The survey took into account (1) population density; (2) broad language divisions; and two or three other factors. Six potential sites were selected for Africa. The most ideal spot was Addis Ababa. And this is now where the Lutheran World Federation is building its station!

The application was submitted to the Imperial Government of Ethiopia in November 1958. A year later a franchise was granted. A detailed contract is being negotiated with the government, under which the station will be operated.

The transmitter station itself, which will be the strongest church-owned station in the world—two 100 kw short-wave transmitters—will be located approximately 25 km outside the capital of Addis Ababa. For the studio and administration building and staff houses a piece of land is under consideration inside the city limits. Members of the staff are already in Addis; others will join them over the next few months. Staff will come from all over the world.

The basic purposes of the radio station have been outlined in a Statement on Purpose and Policy. Let me here summarize it in a slightly different way:

1. *The Lutheran World Federation Radio Station wants to be a Servant of the Christian Churches in Africa and Asia*

You may think of it as the highest Lutheran pulpit in the world. A pulpit from which all kinds of programs designed to nurture and strengthen the churches will be beamed out to the various target areas where these churches are found.

The station will be owned and administered by the Lutheran World Federation. It will be truly ecumenical in its desire to serve all Christian churches. Thirty minutes of daily programming time have been offered

the official church of the host country, the Orthodox Church of Ethiopia. Through an arrangement with the Near East Christian Council and African Christian Councils, approximately one-half of the time will be devoted to non-Lutheran programs. An agreement is being worked out with THE LUTHERAN HOUR, presently heard over some 1,200 stations throughout the world, in some 54 languages, whereby the two broadcasting agencies will co-operate in various ways.

In line with the principle that the station will attempt to serve the local churches, several regional studios are being planned. Some are already in operation. The area churches will plan their own programming strategy and produce their own programs. The Malagasy programs will be produced here in Madagascar, the Zulu and other programs for South Africa will be produced in the Union of South Africa, the Swahili programs in Tanganyika and so on. The tapes will then be mailed to the station in Ethiopia, and put on the air there. Powerful antennas are being constructed enabling us to beam the broadcasts back to the target areas. We are assured that the station will be powerful enough to put a steady and good quality signal into each of the target areas.

*2. In a very limited way, the Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Station will also attempt to serve the nations of Asia and Africa*

Roughly 30 per cent of the programs will be specifically religious. The other 70 per cent will be a variety of news broadcasts, educational programs, and all kinds of service programs: in the fields of agriculture, hygiene, home economics, entertainment, etc. This is indeed an ambitious undertaking. And we shall have to draw on our every talent to make it succeed.

*3. The Lutheran World Federation Station endeavors lastly but primarily to be a Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ*

The official name of the station "Voice of the Gospel" indicates this basic purpose. A look at the map will convince you of the favorable geographical location of the station, particularly in respect to the largely closed areas of Islam occupation. From Dakar in the west you can draw a relatively straight line indicating the invasion of Islam from the north, across the Southern Sahara over to East Africa, where Christian Ethiopia lies like a Christian bridgehead in Muslim territory. Again, thinking of both Asia and Africa, Ethiopia provides a most favorable spot for the station.

Our evangelistic programs will be long-range programs, aimed not only at immediate results but also at gradual changes of attitude in the listener. Too often the "good news" has been compressed into a capsule accomplishing no more than the usual pink pill.

The experience of THE LUTHERAN HOUR programs in Japan has convinced us of the importance of follow-up work. Contact will be established between the local church and the listener. Correspondence courses and other media will be used to instruct him further in the Christian faith in the eventual hope of directing him to become a member of the local church. From 10 to 50 per cent of new membership in the Lutheran churches in Japan have come through such radio contacts. It opens up a whole new set of possibilities for the churches of Africa.

Only a few years ago most of us did not believe that the Lutheran churches were ready to take up the financial burden connected with a giant undertaking. Initial capital investment alone is estimated at roughly \$900,000. Our lack of faith both in God and our fellow Lutherans has been put to shame. Mainly from America and Europe, but also from other parts of the world, smaller and larger gifts have been pledged and received so that the Lutheran World Federation now has available \$550,000. More is expected. The first gift from Africa came from St. Peter's Church in Monrovia, Liberia, one of the few Lutheran churches located near a Christian radio station (Station ELWA) and therefore aware of the blessing such a station can mean to the life and activity of a congregation.

May I here insert a footnote:

In Europe the idea behind the radio project—the common task of preaching the gospel to all of Africa—has indirectly done much to bring churches and missions together in a common purpose. I have no doubt but that the radio project will bring about the same in Africa and Asia.

There are anxious voices—I have heard some of them during travels in Asia and Africa—in the younger churches who ask: All this talk about self-government, national leadership, etc., is fine. The only thing is that we have a faint suspicion it could mean that the churches in the West want to pull out and leave the whole responsibility to us! What is the proof that you in the West will be our partners in the unfinished task before us?

Here is one proof, the radio project. *We are in this task together.* The unfinished task is not an African task—or a European task. It is a common task. We are partners in obedience to Jesus Christ and his gospel.

Yesterday there was mention of the tremendous inspiration given to the missionary movement and indeed to the ecumenical movement by the Edinburgh Conference of 1910. What made Edinburgh 1910 such a source of inspiration? Certainly not the idea of co-operation itself. Administrative machinery rarely generates inspiration. What gave in-

spiration was the vision of preaching the gospel to the world in "our generation." A superhuman task. But one for which we have the promise of Christ's presence and blessing.

I am convinced that the radio project has clearly been entrusted to us at this strategic time. It is a challenge and a responsibility that the Lutheran churches cannot shirk. The challenge must be taken up in genuine and deep humility, realizing our own inadequacies. The responsibility can only be borne in childlike faith in Almighty God. If ever the Lutheran churches of Africa and Asia were in need of the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, it is now in connection with the radio project.

A pioneer non-Lutheran missionary in the Arab world said of the radio project:

*"This is strategically the most important project ever undertaken by the Protestant Church."*

At the time I heard it, it seemed somewhat inflated to me. But I jotted it down in my passport. And every time I look at it, the statement grows on me.

*The conference adopted the following resolution which was submitted by the Resolutions Committee:*

#### RADIO EVANGELISM

The Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference gives praise to Almighty God for the medium of radio communication, for the way he has led churches through the Lutheran World Federation to establish a radio station in Africa, and for the opportunities for witness as a "Voice of the Gospel" it places before us and calls upon all Lutheran churches to support and make full use of the Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service (now being established) for the extension of God's Kingdom in Africa and the nurture of his people.

## THE CHURCH AND THE PROBLEM OF POLYGAMY

*The first All-Africa Lutheran Conference meeting at Marangu, Tanzania, requested the LWF Commission on World Mission to appoint a committee to study the problem of polygamy in Africa and report to the next conference (see "Marangu," page 46). A committee was duly appointed, consisting of Rev. Daffa Djambo, Rev. Ruben Pedersen, Rev. A. Currens, and Rev. Holger Benetsson, with Dr. Sigurd Aske as DWM staff co-ordinator. A number of papers were prepared and exchanged.*

*In Antsirabé a special committee met to review the work which had been done so far and presented a report directly to the plenary. The group consisted of Rev. Ruben Pedersen, Rev. Harvey Currens, Rev. Daffa Djambo, and Dr. Sigurd Aske. Their report was received by the conference which adopted the following resolution: "That this report be commended to the attention of our churches and be referred for further study to the regional theological study committees."*

The problem of polygamy, or more specifically the question of the baptism of a polygamist, has plagued the conscience of church leaders since the beginning of Christian missions in Africa.

It has been a matter of serious discussion at no less than 10 international meetings of Protestant missions from 1856 to 1942.

At these conferences there was never any doubt about monogamy being God's plan for marriage, that it is the teaching of the New Testament. The following is the resolution passed by the International Missionary Conference in 1928:

This conference is convinced that Christian society must be built on Christian family life and that the ideal of Christian family life can only be realized in monogamy.

The basic problem centered about the baptism of those who had entered into polygamous unions in ignorance of the Christian gospel and law (but according to the legal standards of their people) and were subsequently drawn by the gospel, manifested the power of the Spirit in their lives, and desired to be baptized. Should the polygamist

be forced to divorce all his wives but one? What about Christ's injunction against divorce? Should this degree of discipline on Requirements for Church Membership be forced upon those who through ignorance of the gospel entered into such a union? Shall they be denied the grace of baptism until they attain to the Christian ideal?

At the Edinburgh Conference in 1910, information gathered revealed five ways of dealing with the question:

1. There is the view of those who refuse in any circumstance to receive, even as catechumen, a candidate who is living in polygamy.
2. There is the view of those who would accept such a candidate and keep him under Christian instruction, but without baptism until he shall be free from polygamous ties.
3. There is the view of those who would take the responsibility of advising the man to put away all but the first wife, either arranging for the remarriage of those put away or providing for them under suitable guardianship, and who could admit the men to baptism when, by compliance with such advice, he has become the husband of one wife.
4. There is the view of those who equally condemn the practice of polygamy as a violation of the law of Christ, but, regarding the sin as one committed in ignorance and the sinful relation as one which cannot now be undone without greater wrong, think it right to accept a polygamist as a candidate for baptism and baptize the applicant, if suitable on other grounds, under protest against the polygamous relation which still exists, emphasizing the protest by refusing to persons thus baptized the right of holding any office in the church.
5. There is the view which is held by very few that such persons may be admitted to baptism without any special conditions or precautions.

In 1951 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Liberia inaugurated a policy in regard to the baptism of a polygamist that was a radical departure from their former policy and the policies of all other Lutheran missions in Africa:

We affirm that monogamy is God's plan for marriage, that it is the teaching of the New Testament, that it is the ideal relationship for the expression of love between a man and a woman, and is the proper atmosphere within which to develop a Christian family.

The entering into a polygamous marriage by a Christian, whether through the normal channels of giving a dowry, or through inheritance or gift, is an offense against the laws of the church.

However, we find men and women who have entered into polygamous unions in ignorance of the Christian gospel and law, but now express

sincere faith in our Lord, manifest the power of the Spirit in their lives and desire to be baptized; yet they find themselves in certain almost unsolvable conditions, such as: divorcing the mother of a man's children, the almost impossibility of a woman's leaving her husband, or the breaking up of a long established social unit.

In view of such we therefore recommend:

- A. Christians who enter into polygamous marriages shall be excommunicated.
- B. Where evidence of true faith is shown and upon approval of the District Church Council, parties to an established polygamous marriage may be baptized and confirmed. We affirm, however, that in accordance with St. Paul's teaching (*I Tim. 3:2, 12*) no such person, man or woman, shall be permitted to hold office in the church or congregation, or be engaged as a Christian worker. Furthermore, no such baptized person shall enter into further polygamous marriage.

*The following are recommendations to the conference:*

- 1. That we affirm that monogamy is God's plan for marriage, that it is the teaching of the New Testament, that it is the ideal relationship for the expression of love between a man and a woman, and is the proper atmosphere within which to develop a Christian family.  
The entering into a polygamous marriage by a Christian, whether through the normal channels of giving a dowry, or through inheritance, or gift, is an offense against the laws of the church.
- 2. That it is the responsibility of each church, being guided by the Word of God through the Holy Spirit, and being cognizant of the particular time, circumstances, and conditions in which it finds itself, to seek that way which on the one hand will not weaken her standards of faith and practice in the eyes of the world, and on the other hand, will not arbitrarily place upon some who desire its blessings a burden, the consequences of which may be in opposition to the very message of the gospel.

*REPORT OF THE  
RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE  
and  
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS*

## REPORT OF THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

*The following resolutions submitted by the Resolutions Committee were received, by the conference. After discussion and amendment, they were adopted as follows:*

1. The conference is grateful to Almighty God for having made it possible for the Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference to meet in Antsirabé, Madagascar, under the theme "Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life," and for his presence and blessing during this conference.
2. The Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference expresses its appreciation to His Excellency the President of the Malagasy Republic, Philibert Tsiranana, for honoring the conference with his presence on the opening day and for his message and good wishes. We pray God's blessing upon him, his leadership and his country.
3. The Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference thanks the Mayor of Antsirabé and all other officials of the Central and Local Malagasy Governments who have shown consideration and hospitality to this conference and its delegates.
4. The Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference expresses its sincere gratitude and thanks to the Lutheran World Federation, the Department of World Mission and its staff for the vision, planning, and effort given to the Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference which has made it a success to the glory of God and a help for the extension of his Kingdom in Africa.
5. The Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference expresses its gratitude to the churches and missions of Madagascar and to the local congregations and institutions of Tananarive and Antsirabé for the hospitality shown and prays God's blessings upon them all.
6. The Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference is especially grateful for the facilities placed at its disposal in Antsirabé, for the work and services of the conference staff and all those who helped to make the conference possible, for the arrangements made by all committees and for the music rendered by the various choirs to this conference.
7. The Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference meeting in Antsirabé sends greetings in the name of Christ Jesus the Lord to the Youth Conference which will be meeting in Antsirabé, Madagascar, from

September 19th to September 23rd, 1960 and prays that God will bless it with Christian fellowship and the power of his Spirit.

8. The Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference requests the Director of the Department of World Mission to extend on our behalf a greeting in Christ to the General Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation to be held in Helsinki, Finland, in 1963.
9. The Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference looks forward with anticipation to another All-African Lutheran Conference in 1965. It accepts with thanks the gracious invitation extended by His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie I, and by the Ethiopian Evangelical Lutheran Church—Mekane Yesus to hold the Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference in Ethiopia and requests the Commission on World Mission of the LWF to make arrangements for same.
10. The Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference suggests to the LWF's Commission on World Mission and to all participating Lutheran churches of Africa that delegations to the next All-Africa Lutheran Conference include more women among their members.
11. The Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference requests that, in instances where African and Asian member churches of the Lutheran World Federation cannot afford to send or need help to send a representative to the meetings of the Commission on World Mission, the LWF make it financially possible for them to be represented.
12. The Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference expresses its gratitude and thanks to International Business Machines for the generous loan of simultaneous interpretation equipment, the use of which has greatly contributed to the effectiveness of the conference.
13. The Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference expresses its thanks to the speakers and consultants who have participated in the work of this conference.
14. The Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference acknowledges the greetings sent to this conference by the churches, councils, and individuals listed below and requests the Director of the Department of World Mission of the LWF to write letters of acknowledgment and thanks to the same:

Christian Councils of Ghana, Union of South Africa,  
Kenya, Tanganyika and Nigeria  
World Council of Churches, International Missionary Council  
The Lutheran World Federation  
German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southwest Africa  
Lutheran Teachers' Association, Beuster Mission Station,  
South Africa,  
Mr. Bar-Jaona Randriamandimby, Rev. Joel Mahatamba  
Mr. Josef R. Andrianjafinavalona, Berlin Mission Society

# LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

## *Delegations*

### ETHIOPIA-ERITREA

ABRAHAM, His Excellency Emmanuel, Government Official; Box 1329, Addis Ababa  
AREN, Rev. Gustav, Principal, Theological Seminary; Box 1240, Addis Ababa  
DAFFA, Rev. Djammo, President, Gimbi Synod; Aira, Wollega Province  
GEMACHU, Rev. Dennu, Principal, Mekane Yesus Bible School; Mendi, Nakamte, Wollega Province  
GUDINA, Rev. Tumsa; Pastor; Nakamte, Wollega Province  
HABTEZGHI, Rev. Elias, Pastor; c/o Swedish Evangelical Mission, Box 905, Asmara, Eritrea  
LAUNHARDT, Rev. Johannes, Pastor; Box 56, Addis Ababa  
LEGESSE, Mr. Hagos B., Secretary, Ethiopian Evangelical Church—Mekane Yesus; Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce, Box 517, Addis Ababa  
LINDTJORN, Rev. Ommund, Superintendent, Norwegian Lutheran Mission; Box 1366, Addis Ababa  
SCHAEFFER, Dr. Herbert G., Vice-President, Ethiopian Evangelical Church—Mekane Yesus; Director, American Lutheran Mission, Ethiopia; Box 1899, Addis Ababa  
SILLASSIE, Mr. Emmanuel G., Government Official; President, Ethiopian Evangelical Church—Mekane Yesus; Box 858, Addis Ababa  
TSEHAI, Rev. Gebresilassie, Pastor; Box 905, Asmara, Eritrea  
ZELLEKE, Mr. Gabre Egziabher, Presbyter of Norwegian Lutheran Mission, Box 1366, Addis Ababa

### LIBERIA

CURRENS, Rev. Gerald, Director of Language, Literature and Literacy, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Liberia, Monrovia  
KELLER, Rev. Ezra D., President, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Liberia, Monrovia  
MOSES, Mr. Howard, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Liberia, Monrovia

### MADAGASCAR

AARHOLT, Rev. Edvard, Vice-Superintendent; Mission Norvégienne, Antsirabé  
ANDRIAMANANTENASOA, Director and Professor; Collège Luthérien, Antsirabé  
ANDRIANARIJAONA, Rev. Rakoto, Professor of Theology; Vice-President, Malagasy Lutheran Church; École Pastorale Luthérienne, Ivory, Fianarantsoa  
ANDRIANARIVO, Rev. Seth Pierre, Pastor; Isoanalana, Betroka  
BOE, Rev. Isak, Superintendent; Mission Norvégienne, Box 66, Fianarantsoa  
FRANCOIS, Mr. Justin M. M., Evangelist; Mission Luthérienne, Janakafy, Betroka  
HABBERSTAD, Rev. Sverre, NMS Missionary; Soatenana  
HAUS, Rev. Thorkell, NMS Missionary; Betafo  
HELGESSEN, Rev. Leif, NMS Missionary; Vangaindrana  
HORGAR, Rev. Kaare, Director, Bible School, Morondava

JACOBSON, Rev. Arvild T., ALC Missionary; Antanimora Sud  
JOEL, Rev. Berthin, Pastor; Midongy Sud  
KJOSAVIK, Rev. Sigurd, NMS Missionary; Box 11, Maintirano  
LAVISSON, Rev. Thomas, Pastor; Ambohipo, Fandriana  
LOHNE, Rev. Earl H., NMS Missionary; Midongy Sud  
MAHATOVO, Rev. Gilbert, Pastor; Belo sur Tsiribihina  
MUNTHE, Rev. Ludvig, Professor of Theology; École Pastorale, Ivory,  
Fianarantsoa  
NAESHEIM, Rev. Wilhelm, Superintendent; Mission Norvégienne, Manakara  
NIELSEN, Rev. Lauritz, Superintendent; Mission Norvégienne, Box 18,  
Tulear  
NOME, Rev. Trygve, NMS Missionary; Ambatofinandrahana  
NORLIE, Rev. Kenneth L., ALC Missionary; Mission Luthérienne, Beloha  
OLAF, Rev. Edouard, Pastor; Betroka  
PINDERUD, Miss Marie, Teacher; Mission Norvégienne, Antanifotsy, Gare  
Ilempona  
QUANBECK, Rev. Caleb H., Superintendent, South-West Synod; Betsioky-Sud  
RABEHIANDRANA, Mr., Teacher; Mission Norvégienne, Morondava  
RABEKOTO, Mr. Jean, Merchant; Mahazoarivo, Canton d'Evato, District  
d'Ambohimiarivo  
RABENORO, Rev. Johannes, Pastor; Mission Norvégienne, Loharano, Canton  
d'Ambohimiarivo, District d'Antsirabé  
RADAFY, Rev. Bernard, Pastor; Manakara Sud  
RAFAM'ANDRIANJAFY, Mr. Samuel, Director, Rasalama School; Tananarive  
RAFANOMEZANTSOA, Rev. Tsabonjy, Pastor; Maromanana, Ambohimanga-  
Atsima  
RAFARALAHITRIMO, Mr. Evariste, Merchant; Fotadrevim, Canton de Fotad-  
revo, Poste d'Ejeda, Ampanihy Ouest  
RAINIZAFINANDRO, Rev. Rajaonarivelo, Member, National Assembly; Sec-  
retary of the Malagasy Lutheran Church; Fihaonantsoa, Fort Dauphin  
RAINIZANAKA, Mr. Joseph; Amboasary-Sud  
RAJAONA, Rev., Pastor; Mission Luthérienne, Betroka  
RAJAONERA, Mr. Jacques, Cashier; Banque de Madagascar, Morondava  
RAJAONERIVELO, Dr. Alfred, Dentist; Treasurer of the Malagasy Lutheran  
Church; 3, rue Paul Bert, Analakely, Tananarive  
RAJOSOA, Rev., Teacher of Theology; École Pastorale Ivory, Fianarantsoa  
RAKOTO, Mr. Grandoël, Editor, Imprimerie Luthérienne; Antsahamanitra,  
Tananarive  
RAKOTO, Rev. Noel, Pastor; Fianarantsoa  
RAKOTOARISON, Mr. Bernard, Merchant; Vondrozo  
RAKOTOARISON, Mr., Teacher; Savana, Canton de Vatomasina, District  
de Vohipeno  
RAKOTOMALALA, Rev. Samuel, Pastor; Ikalamavony, Fianarantsoa  
RAKOTOMANTSOA, Rev., Pastor; Ihosy Ville  
RAKOTOMAVO, Mr. Randimbisoa, Teacher; École Luthérienne, Antanifotsy  
RAKOTONAMBOA, Rev. Dordine, Pastor; President, Central Synod; Ambohi-  
manga du Sud  
RAKOTONDRABE, Rev. Martin, Pastor; Mandoto Ville  
RAKOTONJAHARY, Mr. Jonera, Director, École Luthérienne; Antoko-  
masiaka, Gare Forgeot, Fianarantsoa  
RAKOTONOELY, Dr. Jerome, Medical Doctor, Box 55, Antsirabé

RAKOTOVAHINY, Mr. Johanes, Teacher; Mission Norvégienne, Ambatofin-andrahana  
RAKOTOVAO, Rev. Rajosefa, Pastor; Vice-Secretary, Malagasy Lutheran Church, Ambatovinaky, Tananarive  
RALAIVAO, Rev. Paul, Pastor; Mission Norvégienne, Soatanana par Fianarantsoa  
RAMAHA, Rev. Gabriel, Pastor; President, Western Synod; Manja, Tulear  
RAMAHEFASOA, Mr., Retired Governor; Manakara-Sud  
RAMANANDAHATRA, Rev. Julien, Pastor; Alarobia, Vohiposa par Ambohimahasoa  
RAMAROLAHY, Rev. Jonah, Pastor; Farihimena, Canton de Mandritsara, District de Betsafo  
RAMBELOSAONA, Mr., Farmer; Antsiriribe, Poste et Gare Ambohimandroso  
RAMIARAMANANA-RALIVAO, Dr. M., Medical Doctor; Ankadifotsy, Tananarive  
RAMOMA, Rev. Thomas, Pastor, South-West Synod President; Mission Luthérienne, Bezaha, Tulear  
RAMONJA, Rev. Vonilahatra, Pastor; Mission Norvégienne, Miandrivao  
RAMORA, Mr. Marson, Secretary-Treasurer, Rural Community; Beakanga, Tsivory  
RANDRIAMAHAZO, Mr. Jaonasivelo, Teacher; Collège Luthérien, Masombahoaka, Fianarantsoa  
RANDRIANASOLA, Mr. Norbert; Antanifotsy  
RATOLOJANAHARY, Mr. Michel, Merchant; Avaratsena, Antsirabé  
RATOMAHENINA, Mr., Merchant; Bekily  
RAZAFIMANDIMBY, Rev. Antoine E., Vice-President, Central Synod; Mission Norvégienne, Fianarantsoa  
RAZAFISOA, Mr. Joël, Teacher; Masombahoaka, Fianarantsoa  
RAZANAJOHARY, Mr., Professor, Government Official; Services Académiques, Tananarive  
REMODY, Mr. Georges, Teacher; Mission Norvégienne, Vangaindrano  
RETOVONA, Rev. Zefania, Pastor; Ambovombe, Androy, Fort Dauphin  
ROBSON, Rev. Pierre, Pastor, President, Eastern Synod; Manakara-Sud  
ROSSING, Rev. Malvin, Missionary Pastor; Mission Luthérienne, Bezaha  
SAAGUS, Rev. Jörgen, NMS Missionary; Morombe  
SAMBOSON, Rev. Clermont, Pastor; Ambinanaindrano, District de Mahanoro, Tamatave Province  
SNEKKENES, Rev. Arthur O., President, Malagasy Lutheran Church; Box 880, Tananarive  
TAHILO, Rev. Gilbert, Pastor, Acting President, Southeastern Synod; Amboasary Sud  
TORVIK, Rev. Olaf, Superintendent, Mission in Southeast Synod; Ft. Dauphin  
TOVILY, Mr. Jean Bert, Farmer; Vangaindrano  
TSIFOLHAY, Rev. Marjaona, District Pastor; Manambaro, Fort Dauphin  
WALTERS, Rev. Orville B., Missionary; Bekily

## NIGERIA

ASSADUGU, Mr. Jonah, Member of the House of Representatives; Box 2, Numan, via Jos  
EZRA, Rev. Jangare, Secretary, Lutheran Church of Christ in the Sudan, c/o S.U.M., Numan, via Jos

JENSEN, Miss Gurli Vibe, Teacher; S.U.M., Numan, via Jos  
PEDERSEN, Rev. Arne Pilgaard, Missionary; Vice-President, Lutheran Church  
of Christ in the Sudan; Box 19, Numan, via Jos  
TODI, Rev. Akila, Pastor; President, Lutheran Church of Christ in the Sudan;  
Box 21, Numan, via Jos

## SOUTH AFRICA

ABRAHAMSE, Rev. Andries Johannes, Pastor; Laingsburg, Cape Province  
BHENGU, Rev. Moses, Pastor; Luwamba Mission Station, P.O. Heatonville,  
via Empangeni, Zululand  
CELE, Rev. Mandlakayise Wilfred, Pastor; Nhlangakazi B.C. School, P.O.  
Kingscliffe, via Dalton, Natal  
CLIFFORD, Mr. William J., Teacher, Treasurer of Circuit; Entumeni Mission  
Station, P.O. Ntumeni, Natal  
CLOETE, Rev. A. A., Pastor; 229 Highfield Road, Korsten, Port Elizabeth  
FOGELQVIST, Rev. Erik, Superintendent, Church of Sweden Mission, Natal;  
Box 88, Dundee, Natal  
FOLLESOE, Rev. Nils M. S., Superintendent, Norwegian Mission in South  
Africa; Box 109, Eshowe, Zululand  
FOSSEUS, Rt. Rev. Helge, Bishop; Rorkes Drift, Natal  
JEPHTHA, Rev. Adolphe Doyle, Pastor, Teacher; Lutheran Parsonage, Box  
119, Douglas, Cape Province  
MAGUBANE, Rev. Andreas, Youth and Evangelism Leader; Kwazenele, Box  
59, Empangeni, Zululand  
MASEKELA, Rev. Patrick M., Pastor in Charge; Private Bag 604, Louis  
Trichardt, Transvaal  
MDINISO, Rev. Hosea, Pastor; Box 19, Kwaluseni, Swaziland  
MHLUNGU, Rev. Paulus Ben, Pastor in Charge; Vice-Chairman, Council of  
Churches on Lutheran Foundation in Southern Africa; 10, Davies  
Street, Doornfontein, Johannesburg  
MSOMI, Rev. Kilbon Josiah, President, Norwegian Lutheran Zulu Synod;  
P.O. Kwamondi, Eshowe, Zululand  
MTETWA, Rev. C. N., Pastor, Vice-President; Entumeni Mission Station,  
P.O. Ntumeni, Natal  
NYATHIKAZI, Mr. Johannes, Teacher and Youth Leader; P.O. Mtulwa, via  
Dalton, Natal  
OTTE, Rev. Carl, Superintendent, American Lutheran Mission in South  
Africa; President, Mankakanana Lutheran Synod; P.O. Ntumeni,  
Zululand  
RAPOO, Rev. Daniel Iga, President, Evangelical Lutheran Batswana Church;  
Box 80, Wolmaransstad, Transvaal  
SCHULTZ, Rev. W. P. H., Superintendent, Berlin Mission in North Transvaal;  
P.O. Box 4, Tshakhuma, via Louis Trichardt, Transvaal  
SCRIBA, Rev. Friedrich H. W., Superintendent, Hermannsburg Mission in  
Natal; P.O. Moorleigh, Natal  
SEPENG, Rev. George Alfred, Pastor; Jouberton, Klerksdorp, Transvaal  
SEPTEMBER, Mr. McDonald, Overseer, Ceza Mission Hospital; Secretary,  
Synodal Council; P.O. Ceza, via Mahlabatini, Zululand  
SITHOLE, Rev. Gabriel, Pastor; Emakhabeleni B.C. School, Private Bag,  
Kranskop  
UOANE, Rev. Timotheus, Pastor and Teacher; 1082 Achilles Street, Lady-  
selborne, Pretoria, Transvaal

## SOUTH-WEST AFRICA

ANDREAS, Rev. Timoteus, Pastor, Teacher; Elim Mission, P.O. Ondangua  
AUALA, Rev. Leonard, Vice-President, The Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo-  
kavango Church; Oniipa, P.O. Ondangua  
BEUKES, Rev. Jakobus, Pastor; Evangelical Lutheran Church, Box 4,  
Rehoboth  
GOAISEB, Rev. Jeremias, Pastor; Box 22, Karibib  
MILK, Rev. Otto, Vice-President, Evangelical Lutheran Church in South-  
West Africa, Box 22, Karibib  
MUFETI, Rev. Josia, Pastor; Engela, Pk. Oshikango  
TEINILÄ, Rev. Veikko Johannes, Supervisor, Okavango District, Runtu via  
Grootfontein  
TJOMBE, Rev. Gabriel, Pastor; Box 37, Otjiwarongo

## SOUTHERN RHODESIA

ALBREKTSON, Rt. Rev. A. T., Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church of South-  
ern Rhodesia; Mnene, P.O. Belingwe  
MOYO, Rev. Masoba, Pastor; Masingo Mission, P.O. Belingwe  
PHASWANA, Rev. Josefa, Pastor; Manama Mission, P.B. 1, Gwanda

## TANGANYIKA

BALIRA, Rev. H., Parish Pastor; Box 98, Bukoba  
BARNABAS, Mr. Immanuel M., Secretary, Uzaramo Lutheran Church; Box  
837, Dar es Salaam  
BEYERHELM, Rev. Carl, Missionary and Youth Worker, Lutheran Church of  
Central Tanganyika; Kinampanda, P.O. Singida  
DAFFA, Mr. Paulo F., Bookkeeper, Education Office; Box 15, Soni  
DYAULI, Mr. David Philip, Medical Assistant and Secretary, Lutheran Church  
of Central Tanganyika, Iambi Mission Hospital, P.O. Singida  
GERVAS, Mr. Sebastian, Medical Assistant and Hospital Manager; Ndolage  
Mission Hospital, P.O. Kamachumu, Bukoba  
HERMANN, Rev. L. A., Pastor; Box 470, Tanga  
HONGOLE, Mr. Augustino S., Youth Secretary, Lutheran Church of Southern  
Tanganyika; Kidugala, P.O. Njombe  
JOHNSON, Rev. Donald E., President, Lutheran Church of Uzaramo; Box  
837, Dar es Salaam  
KATOKE, Mr. Israel, Teacher and Education Assistant; Box 298, Bukoba  
KIJANGWA, Mr. William J., Medical Assistant; Mlalo Mission Hospital,  
P.O. Lushoto  
KILEO, Mr. Johnson, Cooperative Inspector; Box 1619, Sanna Juv, Moshi  
KIMAMULA, Rev. Rodden, Pastor; Evangelical Lutheran Church, c/o Native  
Treasury, P.O. Njombe, Southern Highlands  
LJUNGMAN, Rev. Gunnar B., Superintendent, Evangelical Church of North-  
western Tanganyika; Box 98, Bukoba  
MKUMBO, Mr. Z. L., Headmaster, Kititimu Middle School; Box 101, Singida  
MOSHI, Rev. Stefano R., President, Lutheran Church of Northern Tanganyika;  
Box 195, Moshi  
MSUYA, Mr. Godfrey L., Assistant Medical Secretary, Lutheran Church Hos-  
pital; Machame Central, Box 390, Moshi  
OJANPERÄ, Rev. Olavi, District Missionary; Box 72, Tukuyu  
PAZIA, Rev. Nkanileka, Pastor; Lutheran Church, Box 837, Dar es Salaam

PEDERSEN, Rev. Ruben A., President, Lutheran Church of Central Tanganyika; Box 100, Singida  
RUDE, Rev. Loren A., Pastor and Teacher; Box 9, Moshi  
SCHMIEDEL, Dr. G. M., Medical Secretary, Lutheran Church Hospital, Machame, Box 390, Moshi  
SIMEON, Mr. K. F., Teacher and Assistant Education Secretary; Box 22, Same  
SOLOMON, Miss Aisa, Teacher; Box 485, Moshi  
YONATHAN, Rev. B., Pastor; Lutheran Church of Mbulu, Box 51, Mbulu

### *Speakers and Consultants*

ANDRIANALY, Rev. Ratavao, General Secretary, F.F.M. Synod; 52 Rue George V, Faravohitra, Tananarive, Madagascar  
BAËTA, Dr. Christian G., Lecturer, University of Ghana; Chairman, Christian Council of Ghana; Chairman, International Missionary Council; University Post Office, Legon, via Accra  
BEDFORD, Rev. Francis John, Secretary, British and Foreign Bible Society for East Africa and Madagascar; Box 3627, Nairobi, Kenya  
BLANC, Rev. René, General Secretary, Lutheran Missions' Association of France; 47 Dulong, Paris 17e, France  
BIRKELI, Dr. Fridtjov, General Secretary, Norwegian Mission Society; Asylgaten 10, Stavanger, Norway  
DAHLEN, Rev. Lester A., Executive Director, Board of Missions, Lutheran Free Church; 2122 Riverside Avenue, Minneapolis, Minn., U.S.A.  
DEVASAHAYAM, Dr. G., President, Theological Seminary; Director, Department of Religious Education; Luthergiri, Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh, India  
DIEHL, Dr. Carl Gustav, Director, Church of Sweden Mission; Box 111, Uppsala, Sweden  
HERMELINK, Dr. Jan, Executive Secretary, German Evangelical Missionary Council; Mittelweg 143, Hamburg 13, Germany  
KASTLUND, Rev. Ake, Director, Swedish National Committee for the Lutheran World Federation; Jakobsbergsgatan 19, Stockholm, Sweden  
LUNDEEN, Dr. Malvin H., President, Augustana Lutheran Church; 2445 Park Avenue, Minneapolis 4, Minn., U.S.A.  
MEYER, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Heinrich, Bishop of Luebeck; Chairman, LWF Commission on World Mission; Bäckerstr. 3-5, Luebeck, Germany  
RALAMBOMAHAY, Rev. Jean-Baptiste, President, Evangelical Church of Madagascar; Ambohijatovo, 18 Avenue Labourdonnais, Tananarive, Madagascar  
RASENDRAHASINA, Rev. T., President, General Synod of the L.M.S.; Lot 11 V. 122, Ampandrana Ouest, Tananarive, Madagascar  
SADLER, Dr. Wesley L., Director, Africa Writing Center, Box 1319, Kitwe, Northern Rhodesia  
SCHIOTZ, Dr. Fredrik A., President, The American Lutheran Church; Vice-Chairman, LWF Commission on World Mission; 422 South 5th Street, Minneapolis 15, Minn., U.S.A.  
SCHØDT, Rev. Poul, Executive Secretary, Danish Lutheran Mission; Norasvej 18, Charlottenlund, Denmark  
SYRDAL, Dr. Rolf A., Executive Director, Division of World Missions, The American Lutheran Church; 422 South 5th Street, Minneapolis 15, Minn., U.S.A.

## Staff

### LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

ASKE, Dr. Sigurd, Director, Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service; Associate Director, LWF Department of World Mission; Box 654, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

DUDDE, Rev. William A., Senior Editor, LWF News Bureau; 17 Malagnou, Geneva, Switzerland

HALVERSON, Rev. Alton C. O., Field Representative, Division of World Missions, The American Lutheran Church; 422 South 5th Street, Minneapolis 15, Minn., U.S.A. (photographer)

SOVIK, Dr. Arne, Director, LWF Department of World Mission; 17 Malagnou, Geneva, Switzerland

WALCH, Miss Elsbeth, Secretary to Director of Department of World Mission; 17 Malagnou, Geneva, Switzerland

### MALAGASY LUTHERAN CHURCH

ARNSETH, Miss Helen, Press Assistant; Mission Luthérienne, Manasoa Betsioky-Sud

DAHLEN, Miss M., Nurse; Mission Luthérienne, Manasoa Betsioky-Sud

LOVAAS, Miss Evelyn R., Teacher; c/o Division of World Missions, 422 South 5th Street, Minneapolis 15, Minn., U.S.A.

LUNDE, Mr. Karsten, Director, Blind and Deaf Institute; Mission Norgéenne, Antsirabé

MADLAND, Miss Judith, Nurse; Mission Luthérienne, Manasoa Betsioky-Sud

RAKOTOMAMONJY, Mr. Marline, Teacher, Collège Luthérien, Antsirabé

RAKOTOSALAMA, Rev. Jaofera, President, Northern Synod; Antsirabé

RAMELIARISON, Mr. Louis, Teacher and Youth Leader; Collège Luthérien, Antsirabé

RASOLOFOSAONA, Rev. David, Pastor, Rue Pasteur, Antsirabé

### INTERPRETERS

HALLANGER, Rev. F. S., Editor, Lutheran Press; Box 538, Tananarive

HELLAND, Dr. Melvin A., Professor, Theological Seminary; Ivory, Fianarantsoa

PAKENDORF, Rev. P. G., Superintendent, Southern Transvaal Synod; Chairman, Council of Churches on Lutheran Foundation in Southern Africa; Box 23, Kengray, Johannesburg, South Africa

RATSIMBAZAFY, Professor Davidra, Professor; Collège Luthérien, Mangarivotra-Antsirabé

STARK, Miss Elsie, L.M.S. Missionary Teacher; Villa Montparnasse, Ambohijatovo, Tananarive

TORGERSON, Rev. Sheldon, L.F.C. Missionary; Mission Luthérienne, Ampanihy

TOSO, Rev. Vernon W., ALC Missionary; Manantenina

### STEWARDS

Rabarijaona Lucien, Rabesiaka Martine, Ranoarivony William, Rakantarijao Raymonde, Rasandratana Misa, Rasandratana Florent, Rakotomalala Charles, Rasolofoson Lilian, Razafindratsitohaina Honoré, Rafoloharihenintsoa, Raza-fijaonimanana, Raharizanetsoa

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